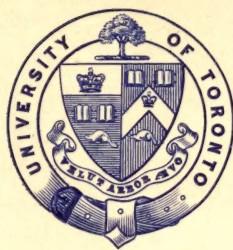


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARIES

A standard linear barcode consisting of vertical black lines of varying widths on a white background.

3 1761 01433999 8

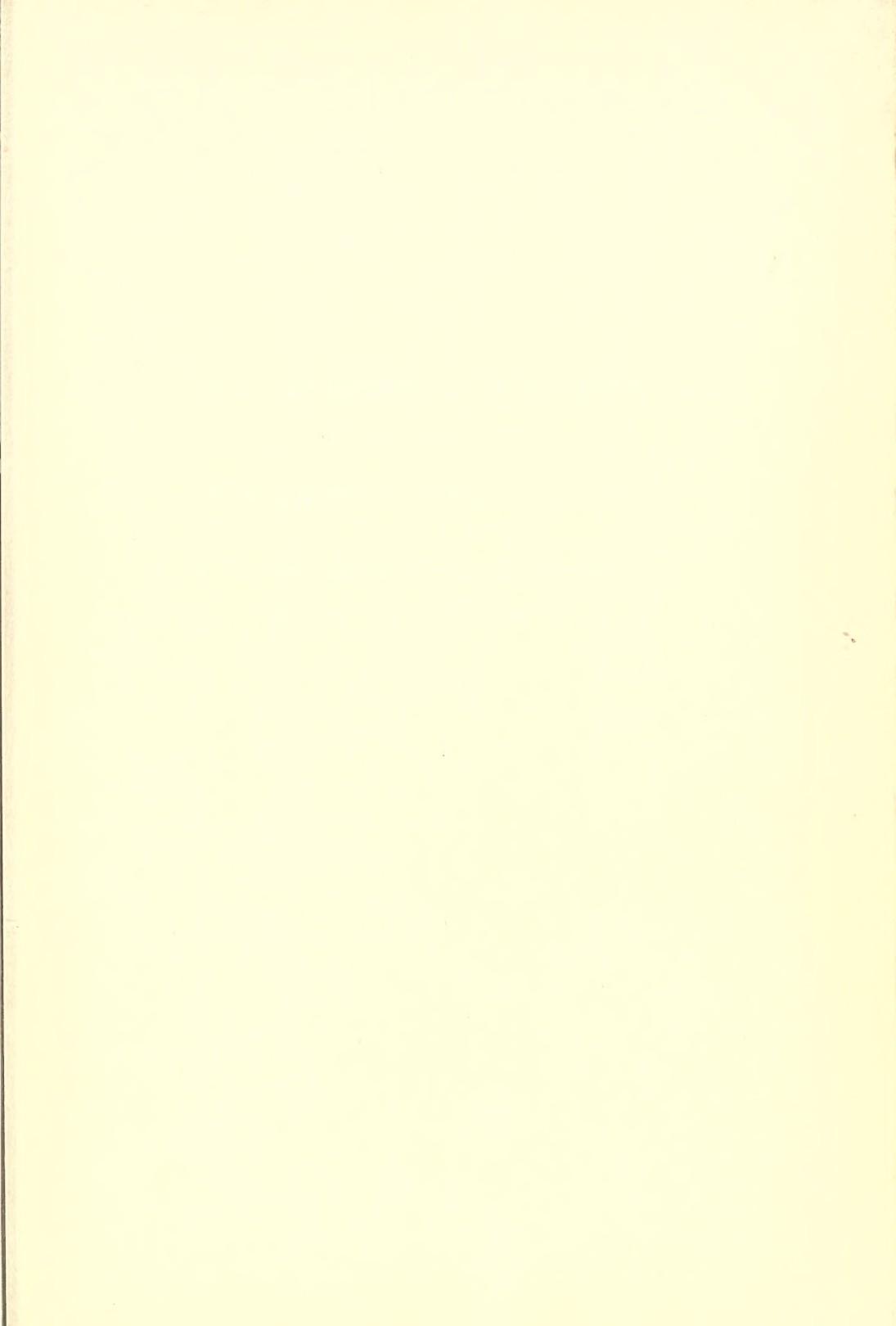


Presented to the Library  
OF THE  
University of Toronto.  
BY

Professor Q. M. Wrong

act 2 & Eng. Wang.





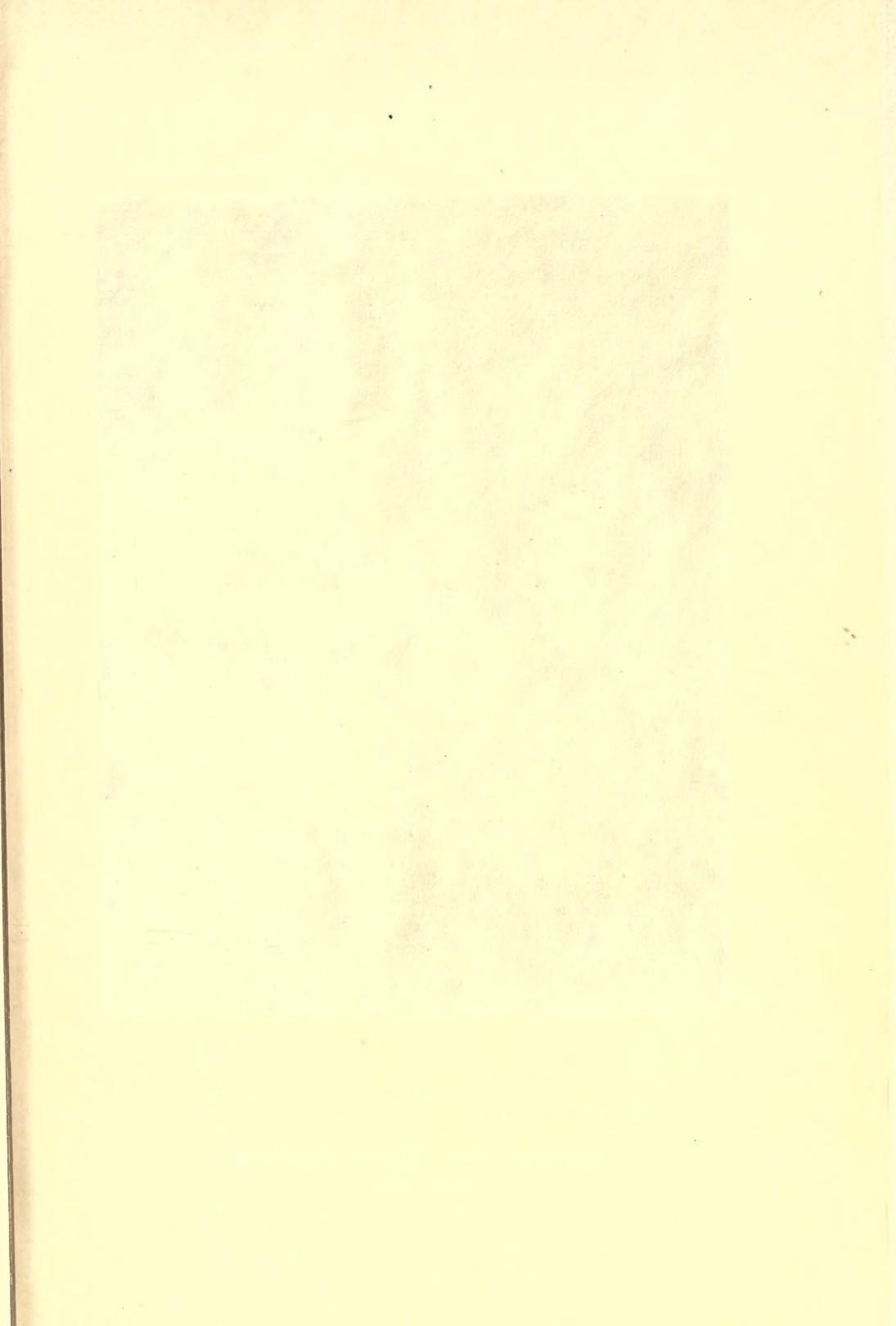


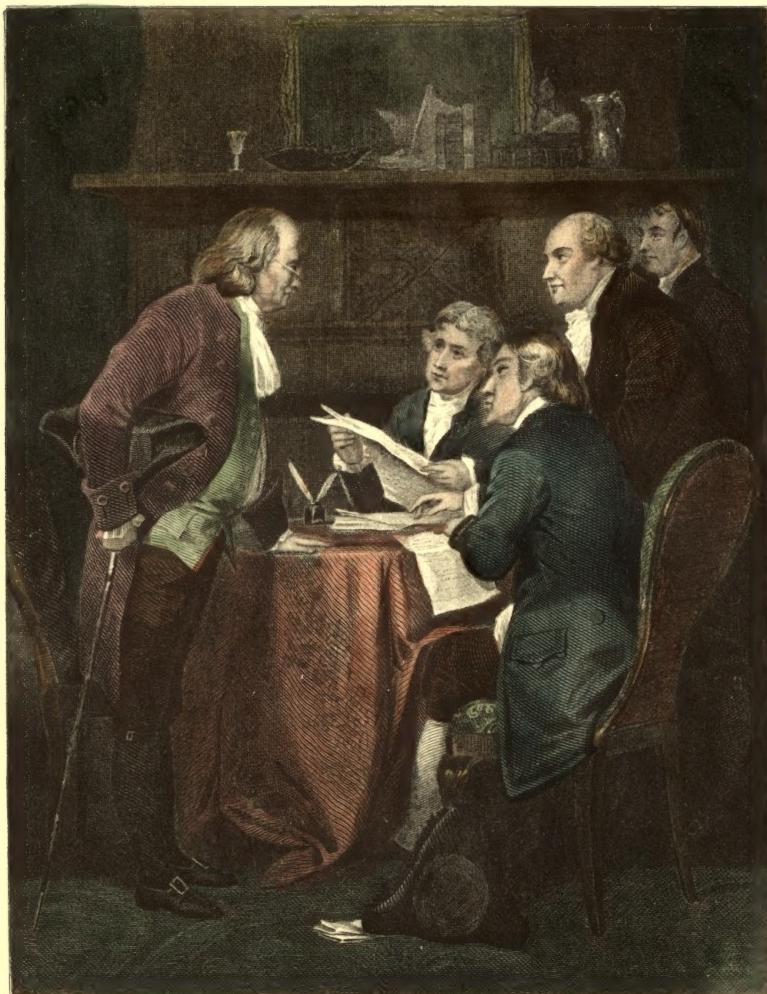
THE INDEPENDENCE EDITION  
OF THE  
WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

is limited to five hundred numbered  
copies, of which this is

No. 183







LIFE AND WRITINGS  
*of*  
THOMAS PAINE

CONTAINING A BIOGRAPHY BY THOMAS  
DRAFTING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE BY  
LEONARD ERSKINE, PAUL  
THE COMMITTEE: FRANKLIN, JEFFERSON, ADAMS,  
ELBERT HUBBARD AND MARILLA M. RICKER  
*Photogravure from the Original Painting*  
*by Alonzo Chappel*

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY  
DANIEL EDWIN WHEELER

191831/5  
10  
W

VINCENT PARKE AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK

MOZART'S HARMONIUM  
IN THE MUSEUM

BY ERNST REINHOLD,  
DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM.

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.)

TRANSLATED BY J. C. WILHELM,

PROFESSOR OF GERMAN LITERATURE,

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

TRANSLATED AND ARRANGED FOR  
AMERICAN READERS BY

JOHN R. COOPER,

PROFESSOR OF GERMAN LITERATURE,

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

*Plates*

# LIFE AND WRITINGS *of* THOMAS PAINÉ

CONTAINING A BIOGRAPHY BY THOMAS  
CLIO RICKMAN AND APPRECIATIONS BY  
LESLIE STEPHEN, LORD ERSKINE, PAUL  
DESJARDINS, ROBERT G. INGERSOLL,  
ELBERT HUBBARD AND MARILLA M. RICKER

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY  
DANIEL EDWIN WHEELER

21831  
10  
2

VINCENT PARKE AND COMPANY  
NEW YORK

J.C  
177  
A.3  
1908  
v.2

COPYRIGHT, 1908, BY  
VINCENT PARKE AND COMPANY

---

---

**2**

---

# COMMON SENSE

ADDRESSED TO THE

## INHABITANTS OF AMERICA

Man knows no master save creating heaven,  
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.  
—THOMPSON



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>EXPLANATORY PREFACE</b> - - - - -	<b>ix</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> - - - - -	<b>xix</b>
 <b>COMMON SENSE</b>	
Of the Origin and Design of Government in General, etc. - - - - -	1
Of Monarchy and Hereditary Succession - -	12
Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs - - - - -	29
Of the Present Ability of America, with Some Miscellaneous Reflections - - - - -	59
<b>APPENDIX</b> - - - - -	<b>78</b>
<b>EPISTLE TO QUAKERS</b> - - - - -	<b>93</b>
 <b>MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS</b>	
African Slavery in America - - - - -	105
A Dialogue Between General Wolfe and General Gage in a Wood near Boston - -	113
The Magazine in America - - - - -	119
Useful and Entertaining Hints - - - - -	128
New Anecdotes of Alexander the Great - -	137
Reflections on the Life and Death of Lord Clive - - - - -	142
Cupid and Hymen - - - - -	152
Duelling - - - - -	159

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Reflections on Titles -	168
The Dream Interpreted -	170
Reflections on Unhappy Marriages	175
Thoughts on Defensive War -	181
An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex	186
A Serious Thought -	195
The Forester's Letters	197
A Dialogue -	255
Retreat Across the Delaware	266
Letter to Franklin, in Paris	271
The Affair of Silas Deane	288

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
DRAFTING THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE - - - - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Photogravure from the Original Painting by Alonzo Chappel	
THE BOSTON TEA PARTY - - - - -	92
Photogravure from an Original Painting	
LIBERTY BELL - - - - -	196
Photogravure from an Original Photograph of the Bell in Independence Hall, Phila- delphia	
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN - - - - -	270
Photogravure from the Original Painting in the State House at Boston	



## EXPLANATORY PREFACE\*

THE North American Republic consists of twenty-four regularly organized states, and an immense extent of territory not yet formed into states, which, with the exception of some mountain ridges, is wholly susceptible of cultivation. It contains upward of two millions of square miles, and is therefore thirteen times as large as France, twenty-three times as large as England, and would, were it peopled as densely as these countries, contain **FOUR HUNDRED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE.**

It is watered on its eastern, western, and part

\* This clear and concise statement of the origin of the American War for Independence is from an edition of "Common Sense" published in 1848 by J. Watson, 3 Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster-Row, London. At that time the English publishers were permitted to print Paine's political writings unmutilated, as they now appear, without molestation by the Government; but the early editions of both "Common Sense" and the "Rights of Man" were issued in a very imperfect form to avoid prosecution; all adverse criticism of the King or Parliament, of tyrants and tyranny, being sternly suppressed. The vacant lines in the pages of the edition of "Common Sense" published by J. Almon, opposite Burlington-house in Piccadilly, 1776, and the many suppressed passages in the "Rights of Man," published H. D. Symonds, Paternoster-Row, 1792, of J. S. Jordan, 166 Fleet Street, 1791, and many others, are all mute yet eloquent witnesses of the injustice and tyranny exercised by the British Government in the Eighteenth Century.  
—*Ed.*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of its southern sides by the ocean, and on part of its northern frontier by immense lakes. It is intersected in all directions by magnificent rivers, and has more facilities for water conveyance than any other continental country; it abounds in mines and minerals, and produces everything necessary for the sustenance and enjoyment of mankind.

The population of the United States has been several times doubled in periods of less than twenty-five years; it now contains upward of twelve millions of people, and bids fair at no very distant period to be more populous and powerful than any nation ever was.

Such is the present state, and such the prospects of a nation originally settled by men who either fled from religious intolerance and persecution to seek peace in the wilderness—by men whose notions of liberty were too high to permit them to endure the tyranny they were subjected to at home—or by men who sought their fortunes as commercial speculators or cultivators of the land. From Britons thus circumstanced has sprung a people who have increased in number, wealth, and intelligence with a rapidity of which history furnishes no parallel.

From the time that the commerce of the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

North American colonies became worth the notice of the British Government, it was put under the most pernicious and absurd restraints, for the supposed advantage of the mother country, and laws were occasionally passed here to regulate their internal affairs.

In the war which preceded the peace of 1762, the colonists took a very decided part, and greatly contributed to the conquests made from the French. Canada, which had been taken from that people, was retained by the British, and Florida was ceded to us by Spain. Thus secured from attack by foreign neighbors, Great Britain and her colonies were more than ever attached to each other.

The Americans were proud of the land of their ancestors and gloried in their descent from Englishmen.

This state of harmony was, however, of short duration. The unexampled expenses of the war required additional taxes to a large amount, and the difficulty this occasioned led the Government in 1764 seriously to contemplate the levying of taxes in the colonies. This was objected to by the colonists, unless they were permitted to send representatives to the British Parliament; to this the Government would not consent, and a dis-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

pute commenced which ended in the separation of the two countries.

Some at least, if not all the colonies, contended that they possessed every legislative power not surrendered by compact: while in Britain it was contended on the part of the Government, that “Parliament possessed the power of binding them in all cases whatever.”

The dispute became serious, but so contemptible was the power of the colonists considered in the eyes of the English Government, that in a debate in the House of Commons, General Grant, who should have known better, declared that “with five regiments of infantry he would undertake to traverse the whole country and drive the inhabitants from one end of it to the other.”

This contempt was not only entertained by the Government and its adherents, but by the people, who were eager to compel their American brethren to submission by force of arms, against which the voice of a few wise men was of no avail. The colonists continuing to refuse the unconditional submission demanded, recourse was had to arms, and on the night of April 18, 1775, they were attacked by the King’s troops

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

at Lexington, and here the first American blood was spilled by their English brethren.

The Americans repelled the aggression, appointed George Washington Commander-in-chief, and a desultory civil war desolated the colonies. The people were undecided in opinion: some were for submission; and others who deprecated the conduct of Government, and publicly declared their detestation, disapproved of resistance as useless, and few were disposed to risk their lives and property in a contest of which none appeared able to foretell the consequences.

The doctrine of independence was a novelty hitherto but slightly advocated by its friends, and they, from the want of numbers and the timidity always attendant on newly-started notions, were looked upon as rash and dangerous, or treacherous and designing men, more deserving of suspicion and censure than of applause and imitation.

It was in this crisis, this interval between fear and principle, that Thomas Paine, then unknown as a public character, published the pamphlet "Common Sense."\* Taking a broader and long-

\* "At the close of the year 1775," says Calvin Blanchard in his "Life of Paine," "when the American Revolution had progressed as far as the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, John Adams, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

er view than his contemporaries, seeing the inevitable consequence of submission, the probable result of a declaration of independence, correctly appreciating the reasons which could be urged

had met together to read the terrible despatches they had received. Having done which, they pause in gloom and silence. Presently Franklin speaks: ‘What,’ he asks, ‘is to be the end of all this? Is it to obtain justice of Great Britain, to change the Ministry, to soften a tax? Or is it for’—He paused; the word *independence* yet choked the bravest throat that sought to utter it.

“At this critical moment, Paine enters. Franklin introduces him and he takes his seat. He well knows the cause of the prevailing gloom, and breaks the deep silence thus: ‘These States of America must be independent of England. That is the only solution of this question.’ They all rise to their feet at this political blasphemy. But, nothing daunted, he goes on; his eye lights up with patriotic fire as he paints the glorious destiny which America, considering her vast resources, ought to achieve, and adjures them to lend their influence to rescue the Western continent from the absurd, unnatural, and unprogressive predicament of being governed by a small island, three thousand miles off. Washington leaped forward, and taking both his hands, besought him to publish these views in a book.

“Paine went to his room, seized his pen, lost sight of every other object, toiled incessantly, and in December, 1775, the work entitled ‘Common Sense,’ which caused the Declaration of Independence, and brought both people and their leaders face to face with the work they had to accomplish was sent forth on its mission. ‘That book,’ says Dr. Rush, ‘burst forth from the press with an effect that has been rarely produced by types and paper, in any age or country.’

“‘Have you seen the pamphlet, ‘Common Sense?’’ asked Major General Lee, in a letter to Washington; ‘I never saw such a masterly, irresistible performance. It will, if I mistake not, in concurrence with the transcendent folly and wickedness of the Ministry, give the *coup-de-grace* to Great Britain. In short, I own myself convinced by the arguments, of the necessity of separation.’”

“The tribute of Paine’s greatest enemy was in these words: ‘The cannon of Washington was not more formidable to the British than the pen of the author of “Common Sense.”’”—Ed.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

on either side, and preëminently possessing the power of clearly stating what he strongly conceived, he addressed himself to the Americans in language which everyone could understand, and none could successfully controvert.

This remarkable and inestimable production may be described from the anathemas of the enemies of liberty. It has received the highest possible praise from the pen of Cheetham, one of Thomas Paine's most venal and shameless calumniators, who thus characterizes the work:

"This pamphlet of forty-seven octavo pages, holding out relief by proposing INDEPENDENCE to an oppressed and despairing people, was published in January, 1776. Speaking a language which the colonists had felt, but not thought, its popularity, terrible in its consequences to the mother country, was unexampled in the history of the press.

"At first involving the colonists, it was thought, in the crime of rebellion, and pointing to a road leading inevitably to ruin, it was read with alarm and indignation, but when the reader (and everybody read it), recovering from the first shock, re-perused it, its arguments, ravishing his feelings and appealing to his pride, re-animated his hopes and satisfied his understand-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ing, that COMMON SENSE, backed by the resources and force of the colonies, poor and feeble as they were, could alone rescue them from the unqualified oppression with which they were threatened.

“The unknown author, in the moments of enthusiasm which succeeded, was hailed as an angel sent from heaven to save from all the horrors of slavery, by his timely, powerful, unerring counsels, a faithful but abused—a brave but misrepresented people.

“When COMMON SENSE arrived at Albany, the Convention of New York was sitting there. General Scott, a leading member, alarmed at the boldness and novelty of its arguments, mentioned his fears to several of his distinguished colleagues, and suggested a private meeting in the evening, for the purpose of writing an answer.

“They accordingly met, and Mr. McThesson read the pamphlet through. At first it was deemed necessary and expedient to answer it without delay, but casting about for the requisite arguments, they concluded to adjourn and meet again. In a few evenings they reassembled, but so rapid was the change of opinion in the colonies at large in favor independence, that they agreed not to oppose it.”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Dr. Gordon in his "History of the American Revolution" writes thus: "The publications which have appeared have greatly promoted the spirit of independency, but no one so much as the pamphlet under the signature of COMMON SENSE, written by Thomas Paine, an Englishman. Nothing could have been better timed\* than this performance—it has produced astonishing effects."

---

Testimonies of this sort from friends and enemies could easily be multiplied, and proofs almost without end could be adduced to show how much the cause of mankind was promoted by Thomas Paine in thus assisting to lay the foundation of the American Republic—the example of

\* Paine was the first to advise the Americans to assert their independence," says Richard Carlisle in his "Life of Paine." "This he did in his famous pamphlet, entitled 'Common Sense,' which, for its consequences and rapid effect, was the most important production that ever issued from the press. This pamphlet appeared at the commencement of the year 1776, and electrified the minds of the oppressed Americans. They had not ventured to harbor the idea of independence, and they dreaded war so much as to be anxious for reconciliation with Britain.

"One incident which gave a stimulus to the pamphlet 'Common Sense' was that it happened to appear on the very day that the King of England's speech reached the United States, in which the Americans were denounced as rebels and traitors, and in which speech it was asserted to be the right of the Legislature of England to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever! Such menace and assertion as this could not fail to kindle the ire of the Americans, and 'Common Sense' came forward to touch their feelings with the spirit of independence in the very nick of time."—Ed.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

which will in time be followed by every people on the earth.

The principles maintained in “Common Sense” are applicable to all times, and to all mankind. They should be carefully studied by every one who is at all desirous to possess that information without which he must ever remain a slave at heart.\*

\* Paine’s own opinion of “Common Sense” may be inferred from the fact, that previous to his death he directed that his body should be interred on his farm at New Rochelle, and a plain stone placed over his grave bearing this inscription:

THOMAS PAINE,  
AUTHOR OF  
COMMON SENSE.

## INTRODUCTION

PERHAPS the sentiments contained in the following pages are not *yet* sufficiently fashionable to procure them general favor; a long habit of not thinking a thing *wrong*, gives it a superficial appearance of being *right*, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.

As a long and violent abuse of power is generally the means of calling the right of it in question (and in matters too which might never have been thought of, had not the sufferers been aggravated into the inquiry), and as the King of England hath undertaken in his *own right* to support the Parliament in which he calls *theirs*, and as the good people of this country are grievously oppressed by the combination, they have an undoubted privilege to inquire into the pretensions of both, and equally to reject the usurpation of either.

In the following sheets, the author hath studiously avoided everything which is personal among ourselves. Compliments as well as censure to individuals make no part thereof. The

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

wise and the worthy need not the triumph of a pamphlet: and those whose sentiments are injudicious or unfriendly, will cease of themselves, unless too much pains are bestowed upon their conversion.

The cause of America is, in a great measure, the cause of all mankind. Many circumstances have, and will arise, which are not local, but universal, and through which the principles of all lovers of mankind are affected, and in the event of which their affections are interested. The laying a country desolate with fire and sword, declaring war against the natural rights of all mankind, and extirpating the defenders thereof from the face of the earth, is the concern of every man to whom nature hath given the power of feeling; of which class, regardless of party censure, is

THE AUTHOR.

*Philadelphia, February 14, 1776.*

## POSTSCRIPT TO PREFACE IN THE THIRD EDITION

P. S.—The publication of this new edition hath been delayed, with a view of taking notice (had it been necessary) of an attempt to refute the Doctrine of Independence: As no answer hath yet appeared, it is now presumed that none will, the time needful for getting such a performance ready for the public being considerably past.

Who the author of this production is, is wholly unnecessary to the public, as the object for attention is the *doctrine itself*, not the *man*. Yet it may not be unnecessary to say, that he is unconnected with any party, and under no sort of influence, public or private, but the influence of reason and principle.

*Philadelphia, February 14, 1776.*

111

# COMMON SENSE

OF THE ORIGIN AND DESIGN OF GOVERNMENT IN  
GENERAL, WITH CONCISE REMARKS ON  
THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

SOME writers have so confounded society with government, as to leave little or no distinction between them; whereas they are not only different, but have different origins. Society is produced by our wants, and government by our wickedness; the former promotes our happiness *positively*, by uniting our affections; the latter *negatively*, by restraining our vices. The one encourages intercourse, the other creates distinctions. The first is a patron, the last a punisher.

Society in every state is a blessing, but government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one; for when we suffer, or are exposed to the same miseries *by a government*, which we might expect in a country *without government*, our calamity is heightened by reflecting that we furnish the means by which we suffer.

Government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence: the palaces of kings are built on the ruins of the bowers of paradise. For, were the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

impulses of conscience clear, uniform, and irresistibly obeyed, man would need no other law-giver; but that not being the case, he finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case, advises him out of two evils to choose the least.

*Wherefore*, security being the true design and end of government, it unanswerably follows, that whatever *form* thereof appears most likely to ensure it to us with the least expense and greatest benefit, is preferable to all others.

In order to give a clear and just idea of the design and end of government, let us suppose a small number of persons settled in some sequestered part of the earth, unconnected with the rest; they will then represent the first peopling of any country, or of the world. In this state of natural liberty, society will be their first thought. A thousand motives will excite them thereto; the strength of one man is so unequal to his wants, and his mind so unfitted for perpetual solitude, that he is soon obliged to seek assistance and relief of another, who in his turn requires the same.

Four or five united would be able to raise a tolerable dwelling in the midst of a wilderness;

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

but *one* man might labor out the common period of life without accomplishing anything: when he had felled his timber he could not remove it, nor erect it after it was removed; hunger in the meantime would urge him from his work, and every different want call him a different way. Disease, nay even misfortune, would be death; for though neither might be mortal, yet either would disable him from living, and reduce him to a state in which he might rather be said to perish than to die.

Thus necessity, like a gravitating power, would soon form our newly-arrived emigrants into society, the reciprocal blessings of which would supersede and render the obligations of law and government unnecessary while they remained perfectly just to each other: but as nothing but heaven is impregnable to vice, it will unavoidably happen, that in proportion as they surmount the first difficulties of emigration, which bound them together in a common cause, they will begin to relax in their duty and attachment to each other; and this remissness will point out the necessity of establishing some form of government to supply the defect of moral virtue.

Some convenient tree will afford them a state-house, under the branches of which the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

whole colony may assemble to deliberate on public matters. It is more than probable that their first laws will have the title only of *Regulations*, and be enforced by no other penalty than public disesteem. In this first parliament every man, by natural right, will have a seat.

But as the colony increases, the public concerns will increase likewise, and the distance at which the members may be separated, will render it too inconvenient for all of them to meet on every occasion as at first, when their number was small, their habitations near, and the public concerns few and trifling. This will point out the convenience of their consenting to leave the legislative part to be managed by a select number chosen from the whole body, who are supposed to have the same concerns at stake which those have who appointed them, and who will act in the same manner as the whole body would were they present.

If the colony continue increasing, it will become necessary to augment the number of representatives, and that the interest of every part of the colony may be attended to, it will be found best to divide the whole into convenient parts, each part sending its proper number; and that the *elected* might never form to themselves

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

an interest separate from the *electors*, prudence will point out the propriety of having elections often; because as the *elected* might by that means return and mix again with the general body of the *electors* in a few months, their fidelity to the public will be secured by the prudent reflection of not making a rod for themselves. And as this frequent interchange will establish a common interest with every part of the community, they will mutually and naturally support each other, and on this (not on the unmeaning name of king) depends the *strength of government and the happiness of the governed.*

Here, then, is the origin and rise of government; namely, a mode rendered necessary by the inability of moral virtue to govern the world; here, too, is the design and end of government, viz., freedom and security. And however our eyes may be dazzled with show, or our ears deceived by sound; however prejudice may warp our wills, or interest darken our understanding; the simple voice of nature and reason will say, it is right.

I draw my idea of the form of government from a principle in nature, which no art can overturn, viz., that the more simple anything is, the less liable it is to be disordered, and the easier

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

repaired when disordered; and with this maxim in view, I offer a few remarks on the so much boasted Constitution of England. That it was noble for the dark and slavish times in which it was erected, is granted. When the world was overrun with tyranny, the least remove therefrom was a glorious rescue. But that it is imperfect, subject to convulsions, and incapable of producing what it seems to promise, is easily demonstrated.

Absolute governments (though the disgrace of human nature) have this advantage with them, that they are simple; if the people suffer, they know the head from which their suffering springs; they know likewise the remedy, and are not bewildered by a variety of causes and cures. But the Constitution of England is so exceedingly complex, that the nation may suffer for years together without being able to discover in which part the fault lies; some will say in one and some in another, and every political physician will advise a different medicine.

I know it is difficult to get over local or long-standing prejudices, yet if we will suffer ourselves to examine the component parts of the English Constitution, we shall find them to be the base remains of two ancient tyrannies, com-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

pounded with some new republican materials.

*First*—The remains of monarchical tyranny in the person of the King.

*Secondly*—The remains of aristocratical tyranny in the persons of the Peers.

*Thirdly*—The new republican materials in the persons of the Commons, on whose virtue depends the freedom of England.

The two first, by being hereditary, are independent of the people; wherefore in a *constitutional sense* they contribute nothing toward the freedom of the state.

To say that the Constitution of England is a *union* of three powers, reciprocally *checking* each other, is farcical; either the words have no meaning, or they are flat contradictions.

To say that the Commons is a check upon the King, presupposes two things:

*First*—That the King is not to be trusted without being looked after, or in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy.

*Secondly*—That the Commons, by being appointed for that purpose, are either wiser or more worthy of confidence than the Crown.

But as the same Constitution which gives the Commons a power to check the King by withhold-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ing the supplies, gives afterwards the King a power to check the Commons by empowering him to reject their other bills, it again supposes that the King is wiser than those whom it has already supposed to be wiser than him. A mere absurdity!

There is something exceedingly ridiculous in the composition of monarchy; it first excludes a man from the means of information, yet empowers him to act in cases where the highest judgment is required. The state of a king shuts him from the world, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly; wherefore the different parts, by unnaturally opposing and destroying each other, prove the whole character to be absurd and useless.

Some writers have explained the English Constitution thus: The King, say they, is one, the people another; the Peers are a house in behalf of the King, the Commons in behalf of the people.

But this hath all the distinctions of a house divided against itself; and though the expressions be pleasantly arranged, yet when examined, they appear idle and ambiguous; and it will always happen, that the nicest construction that words are capable of, when applied to the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

description of something which either cannot exist or is too incomprehensible to be within the compass of description, will be words of sound only, and though they may amuse the ear, they cannot inform the mind, for this explanation includes a previous question, viz.: *How came the King by a power which the people are afraid to trust, and always obliged to check?*

Such a power could not be the gift of a wise people, neither can any power, *which needs checking*, be from God; yet the provision, which the Constitution makes, supposes such a power to exist.

But the provision is unequal to the task; the means either cannot or will not accomplish the end, and the whole affair is a *felo de se*; for as the greater weight will always carry up the less, and as all the wheels of a machine are put in motion by one, it only remains to know which power in the Constitution has the most weight, for that will govern; and though the others, or a part of them, may clog, or, as the phrase is, check the rapidity of its motion, yet so long as they cannot stop it, their endeavors will be ineffectual; the first moving power will at last have its way, and what it wants in speed, is supplied by time.

That the Crown is this overbearing part in

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the English Constitution, needs not be mentioned, and that it derives its whole consequence merely from being the giver of places and pensions, is self-evident; wherefore, though we have been wise enough to shut and lock a door against absolute monarchy, we at the same time have been foolish enough to put the Crown in possession of the key.

The prejudice of Englishmen in favor of their own government by kings, lords and commons, arises as much or more from national pride than reason. Individuals are undoubtedly safer in England than in some other countries, but the *will* of a king is as much the *law* of the land in Britain as in France, with this difference, that instead of proceeding directly from his mouth, it is handed to the people under the more formidable shape of an act of Parliament. For the fate of Charles I hath only made kings more subtle—not more just.

Wherefore, laying aside all national pride and prejudice in favor of modes and forms, the plain truth is, that *it is wholly owing to the constitution of the people, and not to the constitution of the government*, that the Crown is not as oppressive in England as in Turkey.

An inquiry into the *constitutional errors* in

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the English form of government is at this time highly necessary; for as we are never in a proper condition of doing justice to others, while we continue under the influence of some leading partiality, so neither are we capable of doing it to ourselves while we remain fettered by any obstinate prejudice. And as a man who is attached to a prostitute is unfitted to choose or judge of a wife, so any prepossession in favor of a rotten constitution of government will disable us from discerning a good one.

## OF MONARCHY AND HEREDITARY SUCCESSION

MANKIND being originally equals in the order of creation, the equality could only be destroyed by some subsequent circumstances; the distinctions of rich and poor may in a great measure be accounted for, and that without having recourse to the harsh, ill-sounding names of oppression and avarice. Oppression is often the *consequence*, but seldom or never the *means* of riches; and though avarice will preserve a man from being necessitously poor, it generally makes him too timorous to become wealthy.

But there is another and greater distinction, for which no truly natural or religious reason can be assigned, and that is, the distinction of men into KINGS and SUBJECTS. Male and female are the distinctions of nature, good and bad the distinctions of heaven; but how a race of men came into the world so exalted above the rest, and distinguished like some new species, is worth inquiring into, and whether they are the means of happiness or of misery to mankind.

In the early ages of the world, according to the Scripture chronology, there were no kings; the consequence of which was, there were no

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

wars: it is the pride of kings which throws mankind into confusion. Holland without a king hath enjoyed more peace for this last century than any of the monarchical governments in Europe. Antiquity favors the same remark; for the quiet and rural lives of the first patriarchs hath a happy something in them, which vanishes away when we come to the history of Jewish royalty.

Government by kings was first introduced into the world by the heathens, from whom the children of Israel copied the custom. It was the most prosperous invention the devil ever set on foot for the promotion of idolatry. The heathens paid divine honors to their deceased kings, and the Christian world hath improved on the plan, by doing the same to their living ones. How impious is the title of *sacred majesty* applied to a worm who in the midst of his splendor is crumbling into dust!

As the exalting one man so greatly above the rest, cannot be justified on the equal rights of nature, so neither can it be defended on the authority of Scripture; for the will of the Almighty, as declared by Gideon and the prophet Samuel, expressly disapproves of the government by kings.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

All anti-monarchical parts of Scripture have been very smoothly glossed over in monarchical governments, but they undoubtedly merit the attention of countries which have their governments yet to form. *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's* is the Scripture doctrine of courts, yet it is no support of monarchical government, for the Jews at that time were without a king and in a state of vassalage to the Romans.

Near three thousand years passed away from the Mosaic account of the creation before the Jews, under a national delusion, requested a king. Till then their form of government (except in extraordinary cases where the Almighty interposed) was a kind of republic, administered by a judge and the elders of the tribe. Kings they had none, and it was held sinful to acknowledge any being under that title but the Lord of Hosts. And when a man seriously reflects on the idolatrous homage which is paid to the persons of kings he need not wonder that the Almighty, ever jealous of His honor, should disapprove a form of government which so impiously invades the prerogative of heaven.

Monarchy is ranked in Scripture as one of the sins of the Jews, for which a curse is reserved

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

is denounced against them. The history of that transaction is worth attending to.

The children of Israel being oppressed by the Midianites, Gideon marched against them with a small army, and victory, through the Divine interposition, decided in his favor. The Jews, elate with success, and attributing it to the generalship of Gideon, proposed making him a king, saying, "*Rule thou over us, thou and thy son, and thy son's son.*" Here was temptation in its fullest extent; not a kingdom only, but a hereditary one, but Gideon in the piety of his soul replied, "*I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you, THE LORD SHALL RULE OVER YOU.*"

Words need not be more explicit; Gideon doth not *decline* the honor, but denieth their right to give it; neither doth he compliment them with invented declarations of his thanks, but in the positive style of a prophet charges them with disaffection to their proper Sovereign, the King of Heaven.

About one hundred years after this, they fell again into the same error. The hankering which the Jews had for the idolatrous customs of the heathens, is something exceedingly unaccountable; but so it was, that laying hold of the misconduct of Samuel's two sons, who were intrusted

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

with some secular concerns, they came in an abrupt and clamorous manner to Samuel, saying, "*Behold thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways, now make us a king to judge us like all the other nations.*"

And here we cannot but observe that their motives were bad, viz., that they might be *like* unto other nations, *i.e.*, the heathen, whereas their true glory lay in being as much *unlike* them as possible. "*But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king to judge us; and Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, THAT I SHOULD NOT REIGN OVER THEM.*

"*According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even unto this day; wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other Gods; so do they also unto thee. Now therefore harken unto their voice, howbeit, protest solemnly unto them, and show them the manner of the king that shall reign over them,*" *i. e.*, not of any particular king, but the general manner of the kings of the earth, whom Israel was so eagerly copying after. And notwithstanding the great distance of time and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

difference of manners, the character is still in fashion.

*"And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people, that asked of him a king. And he said, This shall be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; he will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots (this description agrees with the present mode of impressing men) and he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties and will set them to ear his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.*

*"And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks and to be bakers (this describes the expense and luxury as well as the oppression of kings) and he will take your fields and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants; and he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give them to his officers and to his servants (by which we see that bribery, corruption, and favoritism, are the standing vices of kings) and he will take the tenth of your men servants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work;*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*and he will take the tenth of your sheep, and ye shall be his servants, and ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen, AND THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR YOU IN THAT DAY.*"

This accounts for the continuation of monarchy; neither do the characters of the few good kings which have lived since, either sanctify the title, or blot out the sinfulness of the origin; the high encomium given of David takes no notice of him *officially as a king*, but only as a *man after God's own heart*. "*Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us, that we may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles.*"

Samuel continued to reason with them, but to no purpose; he set before them their ingratitude, but all would not avail; and seeing them fully bent on their folly, he cried out, "*I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain* (which was then a punishment, being in the time of wheat harvest) *that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, IN ASKING YOU A KING. So Samuel called unto the Lord,*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day, and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God that we die not, for we have added unto our sins this evil to ask a king."*

These portions of Scripture are direct and positive. They admit of no equivocal construction. That the Almighty hath here entered his protest against monarchical government is true, or the Scripture is false. And a man hath good reason to believe, that there is as much of kingcraft as priestcraft in withholding the Scripture from the public in popish countries. For monarchy in every instance is the popery of government.

To the evil of monarchy we have added that of hereditary succession; and as the first is a degradation and lessening of ourselves, so the second, claimed as a matter of right, is an insult and imposition on posterity. For all men being originally equals, no one by birth could have a right to set up his family in perpetual preference to all others forever, and though himself might deserve some decent degree of honors of his contemporaries, yet his descendants might be far too unworthy to inherit them.

One of the strongest *natural* proofs of the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

folly of hereditary right of kings, is that nature disapproves it, otherwise she would not so frequently turn it into ridicule by giving mankind an *ass for a lion*.

Secondly, as no man at first could possess any other public honors than were bestowed upon him, so the givers of those honors could have no power to give away the right of posterity, and though they might say, "We choose you for *our* head," they could not, without manifest injustice to their children, say, "that your children and your children's children shall *reign* over ours for *ever*." Because such an unwise, unjust, unnatural compact might, perhaps, in the next succession put them under the government of a rogue or a fool.

Most wise men in their private sentiments have ever treated hereditary right with contempt; yet it is one of those evils, which when once established is not easily removed; many submit from fear, others from superstition, and the more powerful part shares with the king the plunder of the rest.

This is supposing the present race of kings in the world to have had an honorable origin; whereas it is more than probable, that, could we take off the dark covering of antiquity and trace them to their first rise, we should find the first of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

them nothing better than the principal ruffian of some restless gang, whose savage manners or preëminence in subtility obtained him the title of chief among plunderers; and who by increasing in power, and extending his depredations, overawed the quiet and defenseless to purchase their safety by frequent contributions. Yet his electors could have no idea of giving hereditary right to his descendants, because such a perpetual exclusion of themselves was incompatible with the free and unrestrained principles they professed to live by.

Wherefore, hereditary succession in the early ages of monarchy could not take place as a matter of claim, but as something casual or complementary; but as few or no records were extant in those days, and traditionary history is stuffed with fables, it was very easy after the lapse of a few generations, to trump up some superstitious tale, conveniently timed, Mahomet like, to cram hereditary rights down the throats of the vulgar.

Perhaps the disorders which threatened, or seemed to threaten, on the decease of a leader, and the choice of a new one (for elections among ruffians could not be very orderly) induced many at first to favor hereditary pretensions; by which means it happened, as it hath happened since, that

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

what at first was submitted to as a convenience, was afterwards claimed as a right.

England, since the Conquest, hath known some good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones; yet no man in his senses can say that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one.

A French bastard, landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself King of England against the consent of the natives, is in plain terms a very paltry, rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it.

However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right. If there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and the lion, and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility nor disturb their devotion.

Yet I should be glad to ask, how they suppose kings came at first? The question admits but of three answers, viz., either by lot, by election, or by usurpation. If the first king was taken by lot, it establishes a precedent for the next, which excludes hereditary succession. Saul was, by lot, yet the succession was not hereditary, neither does it appear from that transaction that there was any intention it ever should be.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

If the first king of any country was by election, that likewise establishes a precedent for the next; for to say that the right of all future generations is taken away, by the act of the first electors, in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings forever, hath no parallel in or out of Scripture but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free will of all men lost in Adam; and from such comparison, and it will admit of no other, hereditary succession can derive no glory.

For as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men obeyed; as in the one all mankind were subjected to Satan, and in the other to sovereignty; as our innocence was lost in the first, and our authority in the last; and as both disable us from reassuming some former state and privilege, it unanswerably follows that original sin and hereditary succession are parallels.

Dishonorable rank! Inglorious connection! Yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.

As to usurpation, no man can be so hardy as to defend it; and that William the Conqueror was an usurper is a fact not to be contradicted.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

The plain truth is, that the antiquity of English monarchy will not bear looking into.

But it is not so much the absurdity as the evil of hereditary succession which concerns mankind. Did it insure a race of good and wise men it would have the seal of divine authority, but as it opens a door to the *foolish*, the *wicked*, and the *improper*, it hath in it the nature of oppression.

Men who look upon themselves born to reign, and others to obey, soon grow insolent; selected from the rest of mankind, their minds are early poisoned by importance; and the world they act in differs so materially from the world at large, that they have but little opportunity of knowing its true interests, and when they succeed to the government are frequently the most ignorant and unfit of any throughout the dominions.

Another evil which attends hereditary succession is, that the throne is subject to be possessed by a minor at any age; all which time the regency, under the cover of a king, have every opportunity and inducement to betray their trust. The same national misfortune happens, when a king, worn out with age and infirmity, enters the last stage of human weakness. In both these cases the public becomes the prey of every miscreant who can

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tamper successfully with the follies either of age or infancy.

The most plausible plea, which hath ever been offered in favor of hereditary succession is, that it preserves a nation from civil wars; and were this true, it would be weighty; whereas, it is the most bare-faced falsity ever imposed upon mankind. The whole history of England disowns the fact. Thirty kings and two minors have reigned in that distracted kingdom since the Conquest, in which time there have been (including the Revolution) no less than eight civil wars and nineteen rebellions.

Wherefore, instead of making for peace, it makes against it, and destroys the very foundation it seems to stand on.

The contest for monarchy and succession, between the houses of York and Lancaster, laid England in a scene of blood for many years. Twelve pitched battles, besides skirmishes and sieges, were fought between Henry and Edward.

Twice was Henry prisoner to Edward, who in his turn was prisoner to Henry. And so uncertain is the fate of war and the temper of a nation, when nothing but personal matters are the ground of a quarrel, that Henry was taken in triumph from a prison to a palace, and Edward

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

obliged to fly from a palace to a foreign land; yet, as sudden transitions of temper are seldom lasting, Henry in his turn was driven from the throne, and Edward recalled to succeed him, the Parliament always following the strongest side.

This contest began in the reign of Henry VI and was not entirely extinguished till Henry VII, in whom the families were united; including a period of sixty-seven years, viz., from 1422 to 1489.

In short, monarchy and succession have laid, not this or that kingdom only, but the world in blood and ashes. 'Tis a form of government which the Word of God bears testimony against, and blood will attend it.

If we inquire into the business of a king, we shall find (and in some countries they have none) that after sauntering away their lives without pleasure to themselves or advantage to the nation, they withdraw from the scene, and leave their successors to tread the same useless and idle round. In absolute monarchies the whole weight of business, civil and military, lies on the king; the children of Israel in their request for a king urged this plea, "that he may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles." But in

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

countries where he is neither a judge nor a general, as in England, a man would be puzzled to know what *is* his business.

The nearer any government approaches to a republic, the less business there is for a king. It is somewhat difficult to find a proper name for the Government of England. Sir William Meredith calls it a republic; but in its present state it is unworthy of the name, because the corrupt influence of the Crown, by having all the places at its disposal, hath so effectually swallowed up the power, and eaten out the virtue of the House of Commons (the republican part of the Constitution) that the Government of England is nearly as monarchical as that of France or Spain.

Men fall out with names without understanding them. For it is the republican and not the monarchical part of the Constitution of England which Englishmen glory in, viz., the liberty of choosing a House of Commons from out of their own body—and it is easy to see that when republican virtue fails, slavery ensues. Why is the Constitution of England sickly, but because monarchy hath poisoned the republic, the Crown hath engrossed the Commons?

In England a king hath little more to do than to make war and give away places; which, in

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

plain terms, is to impoverish the nation and set it together by the ears. A pretty business, indeed, for a man to be allowed eight hundred thousand sterling a year for, and worshiped into the bargain.

Of more worth is one honest man to society, and in the sight of God, than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived.

## THOUGHTS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS

**I**N the following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put *on*, or rather that he will not put *off*, the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs: but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms, as a last resource, must decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent hath accepted the challenge.

It has been reported of the late Mr. Pelham (who, though an able minister was not without his faults) that on his being attacked in the House of Commons on the score that his measures were only of a temporary kind, replied, "*they will last*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*my time.*" Should a thought so fatal and unmanly possess the colonies in the present contest, the name of ancestors will be remembered by future generations with detestation.

The sun never shone on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent—of at least one-eighth part of the habitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time, by the proceedings now.

Now is the seed-time of continental union, faith and honor. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound will enlarge with the tree, and posterity read it in full grown characters.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new era for politics is struck; a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, etc., prior to the nineteenth of April, *i.e.*, to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacs of the last year; which, though proper then, are superseded and useless now.

Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

and the same point, viz., a union with Great Britain; the only difference between the parties was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first hath failed, and the second hath withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with and dependent on Great Britain, to examine that connection and dependence on the principles of nature and common sense; to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependent.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, that the same connection is necessary toward her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thriven upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to be-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

come a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had anything to do with her. The commerce, by which she hath enriched herself, are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own, is admitted, and she would have defended Turkey from the same motives, viz.. for the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices, and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering that her motive was *interest*, not *attachment*; and that she did not protect us from *our enemies on our account*, but from *her enemies on her own account*, from those who had no quarrel with us on any *other account*, but who will always be our enemies on the *same account*. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with France and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Spain, were they at war with Britain. The miseries of Hanover, last war, ought to warn us against connections.

It hath lately been asserted in Parliament, that the colonies have no relation to each other but through the parent country, *i.e.*, that Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, and so on for the rest, are sister colonies by the way of England; this is certainly a very round-about way of proving relationship, but it is the nearest and only true way of proving enemyship, if I may so call it. France and Spain never were, nor perhaps ever will be our enemies as *Americans*, but as our being the *subjects of Great Britain*.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore, the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase *parent* or *mother country* hath been jesuitically adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low, papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds.

Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and re-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ligious liberty from *every part* of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of a mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment.

It is pleasant to observe by what regular gradations we surmount the force of local prejudice, as we enlarge our acquaintance with the world.

A man born in any town in England divided into parishes, will naturally associate most with his fellow parishioners (because their interests in many cases will be common) and distinguish him by the name of *neighbor*; if he meet him but a few miles from home, he drops the narrow idea of a street, and salutes him by the name of *townsman*; if he travel out of the county, and meet him in any other, he forgets the minor divisions of street and town, and calls him *countryman*, *i.e.*, *countyman*; but if in their foreign excursions they should associate in France or any other part of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*Europe*, their local remembrance would be enlarged into that of *Englishmen*.

And, by a just parity of reasoning, all Europeans meeting in America, or any other quarter of the globe, are *countrymen*; for England, Holland, Germany, or Sweden, when compared with the whole stand, in the same places on a larger scale, which the division of street, town and country do on the smaller ones; distinctions too limited for continental minds. Not one-third of the inhabitants, even of this province, are of English descent. Wherefore, I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow and ungenerous.

But admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title; and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first King of England, of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the colonies: that in conjunction

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

they might bid defiance to the world. But this is mere presumption; the fate of war is uncertain, neither do the expressions mean anything; for this continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of Europe to have America a *free port*. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to show a single advantage that this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge; not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages we sustain by that connection are without number, and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance, because any submission to or dependence on Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in Euro-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

pean wars and quarrels; and sets us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint.

As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the make-weight in the scale of British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin *because of her connection with Britain*. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality in that case, would be a safer convoy than a man-of-war. Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, '*tis time to part.*'

Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of heaven. The time, likewise, at which the continent was discov-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ered adds weight to the argument, and the manner in which it was peopled increases the force of it. The Reformation was preceded by the discovery of America, as if the Almighty graciously meant to open a sanctuary to the persecuted in future years, when home should afford neither friendship nor safety.

The authority of Great Britain over this continent is a form of government which sooner or later must have an end; and a serious mind can draw no true pleasure by looking forward under the painful and positive conviction that what he calls “the present constitution” is merely temporary.

As parents, we can have no joy, knowing that this *government* is not sufficiently lasting to insure anything which we may bequeath to posterity, and by a plain method of argument, as we are running the next generation into debt, we ought to do the work of it, otherwise we use them meanly and pitifully. In order to discover the line of our duty rightly, we should take our children in our hand, and fix our station a few years further into life; that eminence will present a prospect which a few present fears and prejudices conceal from our sight.

Though I would carefully avoid giving un-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

necessary offense, yet I am inclined to believe, that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation may be included within the following descriptions:

Interested men, who are not to be trusted; weak men, who *cannot* see; prejudiced men, who *will not* see; and a certain set of moderate men who think better of the European world than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the other three.

It is the good fortune of many to live distant from the scene of sorrow; the evil is not sufficiently brought to *their* doors to *make* them feel the precariousness with which all American property is possessed. But let our imaginations transport us for a few moments to Boston; that seat of wretchedness will teach us wisdom, and instruct us forever to renounce a power in whom we can have no trust.

The inhabitants of that unfortunate city, who but a few months ago were in ease and affluence, have now no other alternative than to stay and starve, or turn out to beg; endangered by the fire of their friends if they continue within the city, and plundered by the soldiery if they leave it. In their present situation they are

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

prisoners without the hope of redemption, and in a general attack for their relief, they would be exposed to the fury of both armies.

Men of passive tempers look somewhat lightly over the offenses of Britain, and still hoping for the best, are apt to call out, *Come, come, we shall be friends again, for all this.* But examine the passions and feelings of mankind, bring the doctrine of reconciliation to the touchstone of nature, and then tell me whether you can hereafter love, honor, and faithfully serve the power that hath carried fire and sword into your land?

If you cannot do all these, then you are only deceiving yourselves, and by your delay bringing ruin upon your posterity. Your future connection with Britain, whom you can neither love nor honor, will be forced and unnatural, and being formed only on the plan of present convenience, will in a little time fall into a relapse more wretched than the first.

But, if you say, you can still pass the violations over, then I ask, Hath your house been burnt? Hath your property been destroyed before your face? Are your wife and children destitute of a bed to lie on, or bread to live on? Have you lost a parent or a child by their hands, and yourself the ruined and wretched survivor?

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

If you have not, then you are not a judge of those who have. But if you have, and can still shake hands with the murderers, then you are unworthy the name of husband, father, friend, or lover, and whatever may be your rank or title in life, you have the heart of a coward, and the spirit of a sycophant.

This is not inflaming or exaggerating matters, but trying them by those feelings and affections which nature justifies, and without which, we should be incapable of discharging the social duties of life, or enjoying the felicities of it. I mean not to exhibit horror for the purpose of provoking revenge, but to awaken us from fatal and unmanly slumbers, that we may pursue determinately some fixed object.

It is not in the power of Britain or of Europe to conquer America, if she does not conquer herself by *delay* and *timidity*. The present winter is worth an age if rightly employed, but if lost or neglected the whole continent will partake of the misfortune; and there is no punishment which that man will not deserve, be he who, or what, or where he will, that may be the means of sacrificing a season so precious and useful.

It is repugnant to reason, to the universal order of things, to all examples from former ages,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

to suppose that this continent can longer remain subject to any external power. The most sanguine in Britain does not think so. The utmost stretch of human wisdom cannot, at this time, compass a plan, short of separation, which can promise the continent even a year's security. Reconciliation is *now* a fallacious dream. Nature hath deserted the connection, and art cannot supply her place. For, as Milton wisely expresses, "never can true reconcilement grow, where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep."

Every quiet method for peace hath been ineffectual. Our prayers have been rejected with disdain; and only tended to convince us that nothing flatters vanity, or confirms obstinacy in kings more than repeated petitioning—and nothing hath contributed more than this very measure to make the kings of Europe absolute: witness Denmark and Sweden. Wherefore, since nothing but blows will do, for God's sake, let us come to a final separation, and not leave the next generation to be cutting throats, under the violated, unmeaning names of parent and child.

To say they will never attempt it again, is idle and visionary; we thought so, at the repeal of the Stamp Act, yet a year or two undeceived us: as well may we suppose that nations, which have

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

been once defeated, will never renew the quarrel.

As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition; waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness—there was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something very absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems: England to Europe—America to itself.

I am not induced by motives of pride, party, or resentment to espouse the doctrine of separa-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tion and independence; I am clearly, positively, and conscientiously persuaded that it is the true interest of this continent to be so; that everything short of *that* is mere patchwork; that it can afford no lasting felicity—that it is leaving the sword to our children, and shrinking back at a time, when a little more, a little further, would have rendered this continent the glory of the earth.

As Britain hath not manifested the least inclination toward a compromise, we may be assured that no terms can be obtained worthy the acceptance of the continent, or any ways equal to the expense of blood and treasure we have been already put to.

The object contended for, ought always to bear some just proportion to the expense. The removal of North, or the whole detestable junto, is a matter unworthy the millions we have expended. A temporary stoppage of trade was an inconvenience which would have sufficiently balanced the repeal of all the acts complained of, had such repeals been obtained; but if the whole continent must take up arms, if every man must be a soldier, it is scarcely worth our while to fight against a contemptible ministry only. Dearly, dearly do we pay for the repeal of the acts, if that is all we fight for; for, in a just estimation,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

it is as great a folly to pay a Bunker Hill price for law as for land.

As I have always considered the independency of this continent as an event which sooner or later must arrive, so from the late rapid progress of the continent to maturity, the event could not be far off. Wherefore, on the breaking out of hostilities, it was not worth the while to have disputed a matter which time would have fairly redressed, unless we meant to be in earnest; otherwise, it is like wasting an estate on a suit at law, to regulate the trespasses of a tenant whose lease is just expiring.

No man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than myself before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775,\* but the moment the event of that day was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England forever; and disdain the wretch, that with the pretended title of *Father of his people*, can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.

But admitting that matters were now made up, what would be the event? I answer, the ruin of the continent. And that for several reasons:

*First*, The powers of governing still remain-

\* Massacre at Lexington.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ing in the hands of the King, he will have a negative over the whole legislation of the continent. And as he hath shown himself such an inveterate enemy to liberty, and discovered such a thirst for arbitrary power, is he, or is he not, a proper person to say to these colonies, "*You shall make no laws but what I please?*" And is there any inhabitant in America so ignorant as not to know, that according to what is called the *present constitution*, this continent can make no laws but what the King gives leave to? And is there any man so unwise as not to see, that (considering what has happened) he will suffer no law to be made here, but such as suits *his* purpose?

We may be as effectually enslaved by the want of laws in America, as by submitting to laws made for us in England. After matters are made up (as it is called), can there be any doubt, but the whole power of the Crown will be exerted, to keep this continent as low and humble as possible? Instead of going forward we shall go backward, or be perpetually quarreling, or ridiculously petitioning.

We are already greater than the King wishes us to be, and will he not hereafter endeavor to make us less? To bring the matter to one point, is the power who is jealous of our prosperity a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

proper power to govern us? Whoever says *No*, to this question, is an *independent*, for independency means no more than this: whether we shall make our own laws, or whether the King, the greatest enemy which this continent hath or can have, shall tell us, "*there shall be no laws but such as I like.*"

But the King, you will say, has a negative in England; the people there can make no laws without his consent. In point of right and good order, there is something very ridiculous, that a youth of twenty-one (which hath often happened) shall say to several millions of people, older and wiser than himself, I forbid this or that act of yours to be law.

But in this place I decline this sort of reply, though I will never cease to expose the absurdity of it; and only answer, that England being the King's residence and America not, makes quite another case. The King's negative *here* is ten times more dangerous and fatal than it can be in England; for *there* he will scarcely refuse his consent to a bill for putting England into as strong a state of defense as possible, and in America he would never suffer such a bill to be passed.

America is only a secondary object in the system of British politics—England consults the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

good of *this* country no further than it answers her *own* purpose. Wherefore, her own interest leads her to suppress the growth of *ours* in every case which doth not promote her advantage, or in the least interferes with it. A pretty state we should be in under such a second-hand government, considering what has happened! Men do not change from enemies to friends by the alteration of a name; and in order to show that reconciliation *now* is a dangerous doctrine, I affirm, *that it would be policy in the King at this time, to repeal the acts, for the sake of reinstating himself in the government of the provinces*; in order that he may accomplish by craft and subtlety, *in the long run, what he cannot do by force and violence in the short one.* Reconciliation and ruin are nearly related.

*Secondly,* That as even the best terms, which we can expect to obtain, can amount to no more than a temporary expedient, or a kind of government by guardianship, which can last no longer than till the colonies come of age, so the general face and state of things, in the interim, will be unsettled and unpromising. Emigrants of property will not choose to come to a country whose form of government hangs but by a thread, and which is every day tottering on the brink of com-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

motion and disturbance; and numbers of the present inhabitants would lay hold of the interval to dispose of their effects, and quit the continent.

But the most powerful of all arguments is, that nothing but independence, *i. e.*, a continental form of government, can keep the peace of the continent and preserve it inviolate from civil wars. I dread the event of a reconciliation with Britain now, as it is more than probable that it will be followed by a revolt somewhere or other, the consequences of which may be far more fatal than all the malice of Britain.

Thousands are already ruined by British barbarity. Thousands more will probably suffer the same fate. Those men have other feelings than us who have nothing suffered. All they *now* possess is liberty; what they before enjoyed is sacrificed to its service, and having nothing more to lose, they disdain submission. Besides, the general temper of the colonies toward a British government, will be like that of a youth who is nearly out of his time; they will care very little about her.

And a government which cannot preserve the peace, is no government at all, and in that case we pay our money for nothing; and pray what is it that Britain can do, whose power will be

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

wholly on paper, should a civil tumult break out the very day after reconciliation? I have heard some men say, many of whom I believe spoke without thinking, that they dreaded an independence, fearing that it would produce civil wars.

It is but seldom that our first thoughts are truly correct, and that is the case here; for there is ten times more to dread from a patched-up connection than from independence. I make the sufferer's case my own, and I protest, that were I driven from house and home, my property destroyed, and my circumstances ruined, that as a man, sensible of injuries, I could never relish the doctrine of reconciliation, or consider myself bound thereby.

The colonies have manifested such a spirit of good order and obedience to continental government, as is sufficient to make every reasonable person easy and happy on that head. No man can assign the least pretense for his fears, on any other grounds than such as are truly childish and ridiculous, viz., that one colony will be striving for superiority over another.

Where there are no distinctions there can be no superiority; perfect equality affords no temptation. The republics of Europe are all (and we may say always) in peace. Holland and Switzer-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

land are without wars, foreign or domestic; monarchical governments, it is true, are never long at rest: the crown itself is a temptation to enterprising ruffians at home; and that degree of pride and insolence ever attendant on legal authority, swells into a rupture with foreign powers, in instances where a republican government, by being formed on more natural principles, would negotiate the mistake.

If there is any true cause of fear respecting independence, it is because no plan is yet laid down. Men do not see their way out; wherefore, as an opening into that business, I offer the following hints; at the same time modestly affirming, that I have no other opinion of them myself, than that they may be the means of giving rise to something better. Could the straggling thoughts of individuals be collected, they would frequently form materials for wise and able men to improve into useful matter.

Let the assemblies be annual, with a president only. The representation more equal. Their business wholly domestic, and subject to the authority of a continental congress.

Let each colony be divided into six, eight, or ten, convenient districts, each district to send a proper number of delegates to congress, so that

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

each colony sends at least thirty. The whole number in congress will be at least three hundred and ninety. Each congress to sit . . . . and to choose a president by the following method: When the delegates are met, let a colony be taken from the whole thirteen colonies by lot, after which, let the whole congress choose (by ballot) a president from out of the delegates of that province.

In the next congress, let a colony be taken by lot from twelve only, omitting that colony from which the president was taken in the former congress and so proceeding on till the whole thirteen shall have had their proper rotation. And in order that nothing may pass into a law but what is satisfactorily just, not less than three-fifths of the congress to be called a majority. He that will promote discord, under a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt.

But as there is a peculiar delicacy, from whom or in what manner this business must first arise, and as it seems most agreeable and consistent that it should come from some intermediate body between the governed and the governors, that is, between the congress and the people, let a *Conti-*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*nental Conference* be held, in the following manner, and for the following purpose:

A committee of twenty-six members of congress, viz., two for each colony. Two members from each house of assembly, or provincial convention; and five representatives of the people at large, to be chosen in the capital city or town of each province, for and in behalf of the whole province, by as many qualified voters as shall think proper to attend from all parts of the province for that purpose; or, if more convenient, the representatives may be chosen in two or three of the most populous parts thereof.

In this conference, thus assembled, will be united, the two grand principles of business, *knowledge* and *power*. The members of congress, assemblies, or conventions, by having had experience in national concerns, will be able and useful counsellors, and the whole, being empowered by the people, will have a truly legal authority.

The conferring members being met, let their business be to frame a *Continental Charter*, or Charter of the United Colonies; (answering to what is called the *Magna Charta of England*) fixing the number and manner of choosing members of congress, and members of assembly, with their

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

date of sitting, and drawing the line of business and jurisdiction between them: always remembering, that our strength is continental, not provincial: securing freedom and property to all men, and above all things, the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; with such other matter as is necessary for a charter to contain.

Immediately after which, the said conference to dissolve, and the bodies which shall be chosen conformable to the said charter, to be the legislators and governors of this continent for the time being; whose peace and happiness, may God preserve, Amen.

Should any body of men be hereafter delegated for this or some similar purpose, I offer them the following extracts from that wise observer on governments, Dragonetti. “The science,” says he, “of the politician consists in fixing the true point of happiness and freedom. Those men would deserve the gratitude of ages, who should discover a mode of government that contained the greatest sum of individual happiness, with the least national expense.”—Dragonetti on Virtue and Rewards.

But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend, He reigns above, and doth not

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

make havoc of mankind like the royal brute of Britain. Yet that we may not appear to be defective even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter; let it be brought forth, placed on the divine law, the Word of God; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know, that so far as we approve of monarchy, that in America *the law is king*.

For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king; and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished and scattered among the people whose right it is.

A government of our own is our natural right: and when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced that it is infinitely wiser and safer to form a constitution of our own, in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some Masaniello\* may here-

\* Thomas Aniello, otherwise Masaniello, a fisherman of Naples, who, after spiriting up his countrymen in the public market-place, against the oppression of the Spaniards, to whom the place was then subject, prompted them to revolt, and in the space of a day became king.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

after arise, who, laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge.

Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain, the tottering situation of things will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britains under the oppression of the Conqueror. Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government.

There are thousands and tens of thousands who would think it glorious to expel from the continent that barbarous and hellish power which hath stirred up the Indians and negroes to destroy us; the cruelty hath a double guilt; it is dealing brutally by us and treacherously by them. To talk of friendship with those in whom our reason forbids us to have faith, and our affections, (wounded through a thousand pores,) instruct us to detest, is madness and folly. Every day wears out

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the little remains of kindred between us and them; and can there be any reason to hope that as the relationship expires the affection will increase, or that we shall agree better when we have ten times more and greater concerns to quarrel over than ever?

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is passed? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord now is broken; the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of His image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence, were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her, Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.

## OF THE PRESENT ABILITY OF AMERICA WITH SOME MISCELLANEOUS REFLECTIONS

I HAVE never met with a man, either in England or America, who hath not confessed his opinion that a separation between the countries would take place one time or other: and there is no instance, in which we have shown less judgment, than in endeavoring to describe what we call the ripeness or fitness of the continent for independence.

As all men allow the measure, and vary only in their opinion of the time, let us, in order to remove mistakes, take a general survey of things, and endeavor, if possible, to find out the *very* time. But we need not go far, the inquiry ceases at once, for the *time hath found us*. The general concurrence, the glorious union of all things proves the fact.

It is not in numbers, but in unity, that our great strength lies; yet our present numbers are sufficient to repel the force of all the world. The continent hath, at this time, the largest body of armed and disciplined men of any power under heaven: and is just arrived at that pitch of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

strength, in which no single colony is able to support itself, and the whole when united can accomplish the matter, and either more or less than this might be fatal in its effects. Our land force is already sufficient, and as to naval affairs, we cannot be insensible that Britain would never suffer an American man-of-war to be built while the continent remained in her hands. Wherefore, we should be no forwarder an hundred years hence in that branch than we are now; but the truth is, we should be less so, because the timber of the country is every day diminishing, and that which will remain at last will be far off or difficult to procure.

Were the continent crowded with inhabitants, her sufferings under the present circumstances would be intolerable. The more seaport towns we had, the more should we have both to defend and to lose. Our present numbers are so happily proportioned to our wants, that no man need be idle. The diminution of trade affords an army, and the necessities of an army create a new trade. Debts we have none: and whatever we may contract on this account will serve as a glorious memento of our virtue.

Can we but leave posterity with a settled form of government, an independent constitu-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tion of its own, the purchase at any price will be cheap. But to expend millions for the sake of getting a few vile acts repealed, and routing the present Ministry only, is unworthy the charge, and is using posterity, with the utmost cruelty; because it is leaving them the great work to do, and a debt upon their backs from which they derive no advantage. Such a thought is unworthy a man of honor, and is the true characteristic of a narrow heart and a peddling politician.

The debt we may contract doth not deserve our regard, if the work be but accomplished. No nation ought to be without a debt. A national debt is a national bond; and when it bears no interest, is in no case a grievance.

Britain is oppressed with a debt of upwards of one hundred and forty millions sterling, for which she pays upwards of four millions interest. And as a compensation for her debt, she has a large navy; America is without a debt, and without a navy; yet for the twentieth part of the English national debt, could have a navy as large again. The navy of England is not worth, at this time, more than three millions and a half sterling.

The following calculations are given as a proof that the above estimation of the navy is a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

just one. (See Entick's "Naval History," Intro. page 56.)

The charge of building a ship of each rate, and furnishing her with masts, yards, sails, and rigging, together with a proportion of eight months' boatswain's and carpenter's sea-stores, as calculated by Mr. Burchett, Secretary to the Navy, is as follows:

For a ship of 100 guns . . . . .	£35,553
90 . . . . .	29,886
80 . . . . .	23,638
70 . . . . .	17,785
60 . . . . .	14,197
50 . . . . .	10,606
40 . . . . .	7,758
30 . . . . .	5,846
20 . . . . .	3,710

And from hence it is easy to sum up the value, or cost rather, of the whole British navy, which in the year 1757, when it was at its greatest glory, consisted of the following ships and guns:

Ships	Guns	Cost of one	Cost of all
6	100	£35,553	£213,318
12	90	29,886	358,632
12	80	23,638	283,656
43	70	17,785	764,755
35	60	14,197	496,895
40	50	10,606	424,240
45	40	7,758	344,110
58	20	3,710	215,180
85 Sloops, bombs and fire- ships, one with another	} 2,000	. . .	170,000
	Cost	. . .	3,270,786
	Remains for guns		229,214
			£3,500,000

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

No country on the globe is so happily situated, or so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce. We need go abroad for nothing. Whereas the Dutch, who make large profits by hiring out their ships of war to the Spaniards and Portuguese, are obliged to import most of the materials they use. We ought to view the building a fleet as an article of commerce, it being the natural manufacture of this country. It is the best money we can lay out. A navy when finished is worth more than it cost: and is that nice point in national policy, in which commerce and protection are united. Let us build; if we want them not, we can sell; and by that means replace our paper currency with ready gold and silver.

In point of manning a fleet, people in general run into great errors; it is not necessary that one-fourth part should be sailors. The privateer *Terrible*, Captain Death, stood the hottest engagement of any ship, last war, yet had not twenty sailors on board, though her complement of men was upwards of two hundred.

A few able and social sailors will soon instruct a sufficient number of active landsmen in the common work of a ship. Wherefore, we never can be more capable to begin on maritime mat-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ters than now, while our timber is standing, our fisheries blocked up, and our sailors and shipwrights out of employ. Men-of-war, of seventy and eighty guns, were built forty years ago in New England, and why not the same now?

Ship building is America's greatest pride, and in which she will, in time, excel the whole world. The great empires of the East are mostly inland, and consequently excluded from the possibility of rivaling her. Africa is in a state of barbarism; and no power in Europe hath either such an extent of coast, or such an internal supply of materials. Where nature hath given the one, she hath withheld the other; to America only hath she been liberal of both. The vast empire of Russia is almost shut out from the sea; wherefore, her boundless forests, her tar, iron, and cordage are only articles of commerce.

In point of safety, ought we to be without a fleet? We are not the little people now which we were sixty years ago; at that time we might have trusted our property in the streets, or fields rather; and slept securely without locks or bolts to our doors or windows. The case is now altered, and our methods of defense ought to improve with our increase of property.

A common pirate, twelve months ago, might

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

have come up the Delaware, and laid the city of Philadelphia under instant contribution for what sum he pleased; and the same might have happened to other places. Nay, any daring fellow, in a brig of fourteen or sixteen guns, might have robbed the whole continent, and carried off half a million of money. These are circumstances which demand our attention, and point out the necessity of naval protection.

Some, perhaps, will say, that after we have made it up with Britain, she will protect us. Can they be so unwise as to mean, that she will keep a navy in our harbors for that purpose? Common sense will tell us that the power which hath endeavored to subdue us, is of all others the most improper to defend us. Conquest may be effected under the pretense of friendship; and ourselves, after a long and brave resistance, be at last cheated into slavery. And if her ships are not to be admitted into our harbors, I would ask, how is she to protect us? A navy three or four thousand miles off can be of little use, and on sudden emergencies, none at all. Wherefore, if we must hereafter protect ourselves, why not do it for ourselves? Why do it for another?

The English list of ships of war is long and formidable but not a tenth part of them are at

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

any one time fit for service, numbers of them are not in being; yet their names are pompously continued in the list if only a plank be left of the ship; and not a fifth part of such as are fit for service can be spared on any one station at one time. The East and West Indies, Mediterranean, Africa and other parts of the world, over which Britain extends her claim make large demands upon her navy.

From a mixture of prejudice and inattention, we have contracted a false notion respecting the navy of England, and have talked as if we should have the whole of it to encounter at once, and, for that reason, supposed that we must have one as large; which not being instantly practicable, has been made use of by a set of disguised Tories to discourage our beginning thereon.

Nothing can be further from truth than this; for if America had only a twentieth part of the naval force of Britain, she would be by far an over-match for her; because, as we neither have nor claim any foreign dominion, our whole force would be employed on our own coast, where we should, in the long run, have two to one the advantage of those who had three or four thousand miles to sail over before they could attack

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

us, and the same distance to return in order to re-fit and recruit.

And although Britain, by her fleet, hath a check over our trade to Europe, we have as large a one over her trade to the West Indies, which by laying in the neighborhood of the continent is entirely at its mercy.

Some method might be fallen on to keep up a naval force in time of peace, if we should not judge it necessary to support a constant navy. If premiums were to be given to merchants to build and employ in their service, ships mounted with twenty, thirty, forty or fifty guns (the premiums to be in proportion to the loss of bulk to the merchants) fifty or sixty of those ships with a few guard-ships on constant duty, would keep up a sufficient navy, and that without burdening ourselves with the evil so loudly complained of in England, of suffering their fleet in time of peace to lie rotting in the docks.

To unite the sinews of commerce and defense is sound policy; for when our strength and our riches play into each other's hand we need fear no external enemy.

In almost every article of defense we abound. Hemp flourishes even to rankness, so that we need not want cordage. Our iron is superior

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

to that of other countries. Our small arms equal to any in the world. Cannon we can cast at pleasure. Saltpetre and gunpowder we are every day producing. Our knowledge is hourly improving. Resolution is our inherent character, and courage hath not yet forsaken us. Wherefore, what is it that we want? Why is it that we hesitate?

From Britain we can expect nothing but ruin. If she is once admitted to the government of America again, this continent will not be worth living in. Jealousies will be always arising, insurrections will be constantly happening; and who will go forth to quell them? Who will venture his life to reduce his own countrymen to a foreign obedience?

The difference between Pennsylvania and Connecticut, respecting some unlocated lands, shows the insignificance of a British government, and fully proves that nothing but continental authority can regulate continental matters.

Another reason why the present time is preferable to all others, is that the fewer our numbers are, the more land there is yet unoccupied, which, instead of being lavished by the King on his worthless dependents, may be hereafter applied, not only to the discharge of the present

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

debt, but to the constant support of government. No nation under heaven hath such an advantage as this.

The infant state of the colonies, as it is called, so far from being against, is an argument in favor of independence. We are sufficiently numerous, and were we more so we might be less united. It is a matter worthy of observation, that the more a country is peopled, the smaller their armies are. In military numbers, the ancients far exceeded the moderns: and the reason is evident, for trade being the consequence of population, men became too much absorbed thereby to attend to anything else. Commerce diminishes the spirit both of patriotism and military defense. And history sufficiently informs us, that the bravest achievements were always accomplished in the non-age of a nation.

With the increase of commerce England hath lost its spirit. The city of London, notwithstanding its numbers, submits to continued insults with the patience of a coward. The more men have to lose, the less willing they are to venture. The rich are in general slaves to fear, and submit to courtly power with the trembling duplicity of a spaniel.

Youth is the seed-time of good habits, as well

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

in nations as in individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to form the continent into one government half a century hence. The vast variety of interests, occasioned by an increase of trade and population, would create confusion. Colony would be against colony. Each being able, might scorn each other's assistance; and while the proud and foolish gloried in their little distinctions, the wise would lament that the union had not been formed before.

Wherefore, the *present time* is the *true time* for establishing it. The intimacy which is contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed in misfortune, are of all others, the most lasting and unalterable. Our present union is marked with both these characters; we are young, and we have been distressed; but our concord hath withstood our troubles, and fixes a memorable era for posterity to glory in.

The present time, likewise, is that peculiar time which never happens to a nation but once, viz., the time of forming itself into a government. Most nations have let slip the opportunity, and by that means have been compelled to receive laws from their conquerors, instead of making laws for themselves. First, they had a king, and then a form of government; whereas

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the articles or charter of government, should be formed first, and men delegated to execute them afterwards: but from the errors of other nations, let us learn wisdom, and lay hold of the present opportunity—*to begin government at the right end.*

When William the Conqueror subdued England, he gave them law at the point of the sword; and until we consent that the seat of government in America be legally and authoritatively occupied, we shall be in danger of having it filled by some unfortunate ruffian, who may treat us in the same manner, and then, where will be our freedom? where our property?

As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all governments to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith. Let a man throw aside that narrowness of soul, that selfishness of principle, which the niggards of all professions are so unwilling to part with, and he will be at once delivered of his fears on that head. Suspicion is the companion of mean souls, and the bane of all good society.

For myself, I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be a diversity of religious opinions among

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

us: it affords a larger field for our Christian kindness. Were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would want matter for probation, and on this liberal principle, I look on the various denominations among us, to be like children of the same family, differing only in what is called their Christian names.

In page fifty-three, I threw out a few thoughts on the propriety of a continental charter (for I only presume to offer hints, not plans) and in this place I take the liberty of rementioning the subject, by observing, that a charter is to be understood as a bond of solemn obligation, which the whole enters into, to support the right of every separate part, whether of religion, personal freedom, or property. A firm bargain and a right reckoning make long friends.

In a former page I likewise mentioned the necessity of a large and equal representation; and there is no political matter which more deserves our attention. A small number of electors, or a small number of representatives, are equally dangerous. But if the number of the representatives be not only small, but unequal, the danger is increased. As an instance of this, I mention the following: When the Associators' petition was before the House of Assembly of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Pennsylvania, twenty-eight members only were present; all the Bucks County members, being eight, voted against it, and had seven of the Chester members done the same, this whole province had then been governed by two counties only; and this danger it is always exposed to. The unwarrantable stretch, likewise, which that house made in their last sitting, to gain an undue authority over the delegates of that province, ought to warn the people at large how they trust power out of their own hands.

A set of instructions for their delegates were put together, which in point of sense and business would have dishonored a school-boy, and after being approved of by a *few*, a *very few*, without doors, were carried into the house, and there passed *in behalf of the whole colony*; whereas, did the whole colony know with what ill will that house had entered on some necessary public measures, they would not hesitate a moment to think them unworthy of such a trust.

Immediate necessity makes many things convenient, which if continued would grow into oppressions. Expediency and right are different things. When the calamities of America required a consultation, there was no method so ready, or at that time so proper, as to appoint

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

persons from the several houses of assembly for that purpose; and the wisdom with which they have proceeded hath preserved this continent from ruin.

But as it is more than probable that we shall never be without a *Congress*, every well-wisher to good order must own, that the mode for choosing members of that body, deserves consideration. And I put it as a question to those who make a study of mankind, whether *representation and election* is not too great a power for one and the same body of men to possess? Whenever we are planning for posterity we ought to remember that virtue is not hereditary.

It is from our enemies that we often gain excellent maxims, and are frequently surprised into reason by their mistakes. Mr. Cornwall (one of the lords of the treasury) treated the petition of the New York Assembly with contempt, because *that house*, he said, consisted but of twenty-six members, which trifling number, he argued, could not with decency be put for the whole. We thank him for his involuntary honesty.\*

\*Those who fully understand of what great consequence a large and equal representation is to a state, should read Burgh's "Political Disquisitions."

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

To conclude: However strange it may appear to some, or however unwilling they may be to think so, matters not, but many strong and striking reasons may be given, to show that nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined declaration for independence. Some of which are:

*First.* It is the custom of nations, when any two are at war, for some other powers, not engaged in the quarrel, to step in as mediators, and bring about the preliminaries of a peace: but while America calls herself the subject of Britain, no power, however well disposed she may be, can offer her mediation. Wherefore, in our present state, we may quarrel on forever.

*Secondly.* It is unreasonable to suppose that France or Spain will give us any kind of assistance, if we mean only to make use of that assistance for the purpose of repairing the breach, and strengthening the connection between Britain and America; because, those powers would be sufferers by the consequences.

*Thirdly.* While we profess ourselves the subjects of Britain, we must, in the eyes of foreign nations, be considered as rebels. The precedent is somewhat dangerous to *their peace*, for men to be in arms under the name of subjects; we, on the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

spot, can solve the paradox: but to unite resistance and subjection, requires an idea much too refined for common understanding.

*Fourthly.* Were a manifesto to be published and dispatched to foreign courts, setting forth the miseries we have endured, and the peaceful methods which we have ineffectually used for redress; declaring at the same time, that not being able, any longer, to live happily or safely under the cruel disposition of the British Court, we had been driven to the necessity of breaking off all connection with her; at the same time, assuring all such courts of our peaceable disposition toward them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them.

Such a memorial would produce more good effects to this continent than if a ship were freighted with petitions to Britain.

Under our present denomination of British subjects, we can neither be received nor heard abroad: the custom of all courts is against us, and will be so, until, by an independence, we take rank with other nations.

These proceedings may at first appear strange and difficult; but like all other steps which we have already passed over, will in a little time become familiar and agreeable; and,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

until an independence is declared, the continent will feel itself like a man who continues putting off some unpleasant business from day to day, yet knows it must be done, hates to set about it, wishes it over, and is continually haunted with the thoughts of its necessity.

## APPENDIX

**S**INCE the publication of the first edition of this pamphlet, or rather, on the same day on which it came out, the King's speech made its appearance in this city. Had the spirit of prophecy directed the birth of this production, it could not have brought it forth at a more seasonable juncture, or at a more necessary time. The bloody-mindedness of the one shows the necessity of pursuing the doctrine of the other. Men read by way of revenge: and the speech, instead of terrifying, prepared a way for the manly principles of independence.

Ceremony, and even silence, from whatever motives they may arise, have a hurtful tendency when they give the least degree of countenance to base and wicked performances; wherefore, if this maxim be admitted, it naturally follows, that the King's speech, as being a piece of finished villainy, deserved and still deserves a general execration, both by the Congress and the people.

Yet, as the domestic tranquillity of a nation depends greatly on the *chastity* of what may properly be called *national manners*, it is often better to pass some things over in silent disdain,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

than to make use of such new methods of dislike, as might introduce the least innovation on that guardian of our peace and safety. And, perhaps, it is chiefly owing to this prudent delicacy, that the King's speech hath not before now suffered a public execution.

The speech, if it may be called one, is nothing better than a wilful, audacious libel against the truth, the common good, and the existence of mankind; and is a formal and pompous method of offering up human sacrifices to the pride of tyrants. But this general massacre of mankind is one of the privileges and the certain consequences of kings; for as nature knows them *not*, they know *not her* and although they are beings of our *own* creating, they know not *us*, and are become the gods of their creators.

The speech hath one good quality, which is, that it is not calculated to deceive, neither can we, if we would, be deceived by it. Brutality and tyranny appear on the face of it. It leaves us at no loss; and every line convinces, even in the moment of reading, that he who hunts the woods for prey, the naked and untutored Indian, is less savage than the King of Britain.

Sir John Dalrymple, the putative father of a whining, jesuitical piece, fallaciously called, "*The*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*address of the people of ENGLAND to the inhabitants of AMERICA,*" hath perhaps, from a vain supposition that the people *here* were to be frightened at the pomp and description of a king, given (though very unwisely on his part) the real character of the present one: "But," says this writer, "if you are inclined to pay compliments to an administration, which we do not complain of" (meaning the Marquis of Rockingham's at the repeal of the Stamp Act) "it is very unfair in you to withhold them from that prince, *by whose NOD ALONE they were permitted to do anything.*"

This is Toryism with a witness! Here is idolatry, even without a mask; and he who can calmly hear and digest such doctrine, hath forfeited his claim to rationality; is an apostate from the order of manhood, and ought to be considered—as one, who hath not only given up the proper dignity of man, but sunk himself beneath the rank of animals, and contemptibly crawls through the world like a worm.

However, it matters very little now, what the King of England either says or does; he hath wickedly broken through every moral and human obligation, trampled nature and conscience beneath his feet; and by a steady and constitutional spirit of insolence and cruelty, procured for him-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

self an universal hatred. It is *now* the interest of America to provide for herself. She hath already a large and young family, whom it is more her duty to take care of, than to be granting away her property to support a power which is become a reproach to the names of men and Christians.

*Ye*, whose office it is to watch over the morals of a nation, of whatsoever sect or denomination ye are of, as well as ye who are more immediately the guardians of the public liberty, if ye wish to preserve your native country uncontaminated by European corruption, ye must in secret wish a separation. But leaving the moral part to private reflection, I shall chiefly confine my further remarks to the following heads:

*First.* That it is in the interest of America to be separated from Britain.

*Secondly.* Which is the easiest and most practicable plan, *reconciliation or independence?* with some occasional remarks.

In support of the first, I could, if I judged it proper, produce the opinion of some of the ablest and most experienced men on this continent: and whose sentiments on that head are not yet publicly known. It is in reality a self-evident posi-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tion: for no nation in a state of foreign dependence, limited in its commerce, and cramped and fettered in its legislative powers, can ever arrive at any material eminence.

America doth not yet know what opulence is; and although the progress she hath made stands unparalleled in the history of other nations, it is but childhood compared with what she would be capable of arriving at, had she, as she ought to have, the legislative powers in her own hands. England is at this time proudly coveting what would do her no good were she to accomplish it; and the continent hesitating on a matter which will be her final ruin if neglected.

It is the commerce and not the conquest of America by which England is to be benefited, and that would in a great measure continue, were the countries as independent of each other as France and Spain; because in many articles neither can go to a better market. But it is the independence of this country of Britain, or any other, which is now the main and only object worthy of contention, and which, like all other truths discovered by necessity, will appear clearer and stronger every day.

*First.* Because it will come to that, one time or other.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*Secondly.* Because the longer it is delayed, the harder it will be to accomplish.

I have frequently amused myself both in public and private companies, with silently remarking the specious errors of those who speak without reflecting. And among the many which I have heard, the following seems the most general, viz., that if this rupture should happen forty or fifty years hence, instead of *now*, the continent would be more able to shake off the dependence.

To which I reply, that our military ability, *at this time*, arises from the experience gained in the last war, and which in forty or fifty years time would be totally extinct. The continent would not, by that time, have a general, or even a military officer left; and we, or those who may succeed us, would be as ignorant of martial matters as the ancient Indians: and this single position, closely attended to, will unanswerably prove that the present time is preferable to all others. The argument turns thus—at the conclusion of the last war, we had experience, but wanted numbers; and forty or fifty years hence, we shall have numbers, without experience; wherefore, the proper point of time must be some particular point between the two extremes, in which a sufficiency of the former remains, and a proper in-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

crease of the latter is obtained: and that point of time is the present time.

The reader will pardon this digression, as it does not properly come under the head I first set out with, and to which I again return by the following position, viz.:

Should affairs be patched up with Britain, and she remain the governing and sovereign power of America (which, as matters are now circumstanced, is giving up the point entirely) we shall deprive ourselves of the very means of sinking the debt we have, or may contract. The value of the back lands, which some of the provinces are clandestinely deprived of by the unjust extension of the limits of Canada, valued only at five pounds sterling per hundred acres, amounts to upwards of twenty-five millions, Pennsylvania currency; and the quit-rents at one penny sterling per acre, to two millions yearly.

It is by the sale of those lands that the debt may be sunk without burden to any, and the quit-rent reserved thereon, will always lessen and in time will wholly support the yearly expense of government. It matters not how long the debt is in paying, so that the lands when sold be applied to the discharge of it, and for the ex-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ecution of which the Congress, for the time being, will be the continental trustees.

I proceed now to the second head, viz.: Which is the easiest and most practicable plan, *reconciliation or independence?* with some occasional remarks.

He who takes nature for his guide, is not easily beaten out of his argument, and on that ground, I answer generally—*That INDEPENDENCE being a SINGLE, SIMPLE LINE, contained within ourselves; and reconciliation, a matter exceedingly perplexed and complicated, and in which a treacherous, capricious court is to interfere, gives the answer without a doubt.*

The present state of America is truly alarming to every man who is capable of reflection. Without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on, and granted by, courtesy. Held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is nevertheless subject to change, and which every secret enemy is endeavoring to dissolve. Our present condition is legislation without law; wisdom without a plan; a constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect independence contending for dependence.

The instance is without a precedent; the case

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

never existed before; and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced system of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random, and seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion presents. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore, everyone thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases.

The Tories dared not have assembled offensively, had they known that their lives, by that act, were forfeited to the laws of the state. A line of distinction should be drawn between English soldiers taken in battle, and inhabitants of America taken in arms. The first are prisoners, but the latter traitors. The one forfeits his liberty, the other his head.

Notwithstanding our wisdom, there is a visible feebleness in some of our proceedings which gives encouragement to dissensions. The Continental Belt is too loosely buckled. And if something is not done in time, it will be too late to do anything, and we shall fall into a state in which neither *Reconciliation* nor *Independence* will be practicable. The King and his worthless adherents are got at their old game of dividing the continent, and there are not wanting among us

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

printers who will be busy in spreading specious falsehoods. The artful and hypocritical letter which appeared a few months ago in two of the New York papers, and likewise in others, is an evidence that there are men who want either judgment or honesty.

It is easy getting into holes and corners and talking of reconciliation: but do such men seriously consider how difficult the task is, and how dangerous it may prove, should the continent divide thereon? Do they take within their view all the various orders of men whose situation and circumstances, as well as their own, are to be considered therein? Do they put themselves in the place of the sufferer whose *all* is *already* gone, and of the soldier, who hath quitted *all* for the defense of his country? If their ill-judged moderation be suited to their own private situations *only*, regardless of others, the event will convince them that “they are reckoning without their host.”

Put us, say some, on the footing we were in the year 1763: to which I answer, the request is not *now* in the power of Britain to comply with, neither will she propose it; but if it were, and even should it be granted, I ask, as a reasonable question, by what means is such a corrupt and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

faithless court to be kept to its engagements? Another parliament, nay, even the present, may hereafter repeal the obligation, on the pretense of its being violently obtained, or unwisely granted; and in that case, where is our redress? No going to law with nations; cannon are the barristers of crowns, and the sword, not of justice, but of war, decides the suit.

To be on the footing of 1763, it is not sufficient that the laws only be put in the same state, but that our circumstances, likewise, be put in the same state; our burned and destroyed towns repaired, or built up, our private losses made good, our public debts (contracted for defense) discharged; otherwise, we shall be millions worse than we were at that enviable period. Such a request, had it been complied with a year ago, would have won the heart and the soul of the continent—but now it is too late, “the Rubicon is passed.”

Besides, the taking up arms, merely to enforce the repeal of a pecuniary law, seems as unwarrantable by the divine law, and as repugnant to human feelings, as the taking up arms to enforce obedience thereto. The object, on either side, doth not justify the means; for the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

lives of men are too valuable to be cast away on such trifles.

It is the violence which is done and threatened to our persons; the destruction of our property by an armed force; the invasion of our country by fire and sword, which conscientiously qualifies the use of arms: and the instant in which such a mode of defense became necessary, all subjection to Britain ought to have ceased; and the independence of America should have been considered as dating its era from, and published by, *the first musket that was fired against her.*

This line is a line of consistency; neither drawn by caprice, nor extended by ambition; but produced by a chain of events of which the colonies were not the authors.

I shall conclude these remarks with the following timely and well-intended hints. We ought to reflect, that there are three different ways by which an independency may hereafter be effected; and that *one* of those *three* will, one day or other, be the fate of America, viz., by the legal voice of the people in Congress; by a military power; or by a mob.

It may not always happen that our soldiers are citizens, and the multitude a body of reasonable men; virtue, as I have already remarked, is

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

not hereditary, neither is it perpetual. Should an independency be brought about by the first of those means, we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now.

The birthday of a new world is at hand, and a race of men, perhaps as numerous as all Europe contains, are to receive their portion of freedom from the events of a few months. The reflection is awful—and in this point of view, how trifling, how ridiculous, do the little, paltry cavilings of a few weak or interested men appear, when weighed against the business of a world.

Should we neglect the present favorable and inviting period, and independence be hereafter effected by any other means, we must charge the consequence to ourselves, or to those rather, whose narrow and prejudiced souls are habitually opposing the measure, without either inquiring or reflecting. There are reasons to be given in support of independence, which men should rather privately think of, than be publicly told of. We ought not to be debating whether we shall be independent or not, but anxious to ac-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

complish it on a firm, secure and honorable basis, and uneasy rather, that it is not yet begun upon.

Every day convinces us of its necessity. Even the Tories (if such beings yet remain among us) should, of all men, be the most solicitous to promote it; for as the appointment of committees at first, protected them from popular rage, so a wise and well established form of government will be the only certain means of continuing it securely to them. Wherefore, if they have not virtue enough to be *Whigs*, they ought to have prudence enough to wish for independence.

In short, independence is the only *bond* that can tie and keep us together. We shall then see our object, and our ears shall be legally shut against the schemes of an intriguing, as well as a cruel enemy. We shall then, too, be on a proper footing to treat with Britain; for there is reason to conclude, that the pride of that court will be less hurt by treating with the American states for terms of peace, than with those whom she denominates “rebellious subjects,” for terms of accommodation. It is our delaying it that encourages her to hope for conquest, and our backwardness tends only to prolong the war.

As we have, without any good effect there-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

from withheld our trade to obtain a redress of our grievances, let us *now* try the alternative, by independently redressing them ourselves, and then offering to open the trade. The mercantile and reasonable part of England will be still with us; because peace *with* trade, is preferable to war *without* it. And if this offer be not accepted, other courts may be applied to.

On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, it is a negative proof that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or that the party in favor of it are too numerous to be opposed. *Wherefore*, instead of gazing at each other, with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us hold out to his neighbor the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line, which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissension. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of a *good citizen*, *an open and resolute friend*, and *a virtuous supporter of the RIGHTS of MANKIND, and of the FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA.*

*CIPOLLINI ZEPPOLE*

*galatella e ricotta con zucchero e nocciole*



## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

from withheld our trade to obtain a redress of our grievances, let us *now* try the alternative, by independently redressing them ourselves, and then offering to open the trade. The mercantile and reasonable part of England will be still with us; because peace *with* trade, is preferable to war *without* it. And if this offer be not accepted, other courts may be applied to.

On these grounds I rest the matter. And as no offer hath yet been made to refute the doctrine contained in the former editions of this pamphlet, <sup>THE, BOSTON TEA PARTY  
*Photogravure from an Original Painting*</sup> it is a negative proof that either the doctrine cannot be refuted, or that the party in favor of it are too numerous to be opposed. Wherefore, instead of gazing at each other, with suspicious or doubtful curiosity, let each of us hold out to his neighbor the hearty hand of friendship, and unite in drawing a line, which, like an act of oblivion, shall bury in forgetfulness every former dissension. Let the names of Whig and Tory be extinct; and let none other be heard among us, than those of a *good citizen*, *an open and resolute friend*, and *a virtuous supporter of the RIGHTS OF MANKIND, and of the FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES OF AMERICA.*





## EPISTLE TO QUAKERS

*To the Representatives of the Religious Society of the people called Quakers, or to so many of them as were concerned in publishing a late piece, entitled "THE ANCIENT TESTIMONY and PRINCIPLES of the people called QUAKERS renewed, with respect to the KING and GOVERNMENT, and touching the COMMOTIONS now prevailing in these and other parts of AMERICA, addressed to the PEOPLE IN GENERAL."*

**T**HE writer of this is one of those few who never dishonors religion, either by ridiculing or caviling at any denomination whatsoever. To God, and not to man, are all men accountable on the score of religion. Wherefore, this epistle is not so properly addressed to you as a religious, but as a political body, dabbling in matters which the professed quietude of your principles instructs you not to meddle with.

As you have, without a proper authority for so doing, put yourselves in the place of the whole body of the Quakers, so the writer of this, in order to be on an equal rank with yourselves, is under the necessity of putting himself in the place of all those who approve the very writings and principles against which your Testimony is

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

directed: and he hath chosen this singular situation, in order that you might discover in him, that presumption of character which you cannot see in yourselves. For neither he nor you have any claim or title to *Political Representation*.

When men have departed from the right way, it is no wonder that they stumble and fall. And it is evident from the manner in which ye have managed your Testimony, that politics (as a religious body of men) is not your proper walk; for however well adapted it may appear to you, it is, nevertheless, a jumble of good and bad put unwisely together, and the conclusion drawn therefrom both unnatural and unjust.

The two first pages (and the whole doth not make four) we give you credit for, and expect the same civility from you, because the love and desire of peace is not confined to Quakerism, it is the *natural*, as well as the religious wish of all denominations of men. And on this ground, as men laboring to establish an independent constitution of our own, do we exceed all others in our hope, end, and aim.

*Our plan is peace forever.* We are tired of contention with Britain, and can see no real end to it but in a final separation. We act consistently, because, for the sake of introducing an

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

endless and uninterrupted peace, do we bear the evils and burdens of the present day. We are endeavoring, and will steadily continue to endeavor, to separate and dissolve a connection which has already filled our land with blood; and which, while the name of it remains, will be the fatal cause of future mischiefs to both countries.

We fight neither for revenge nor conquest; neither from pride nor passion; we are not insulting the world with our fleets and armies, nor ravaging the globe for plunder. Beneath the shade of our own vines we are attacked; in our own houses, and on our own lands, is the violence committed against us. We view our enemies in the characters of highwaymen and housebreakers, and having no defense for ourselves in the civil law, are obliged to punish them by the military one, and apply the sword in the very case where you have before now applied the halter.

Perhaps we feel for the ruined and insulted sufferers in all and every part of the continent, with a degree of tenderness which hath not yet made its way into some of your bosoms. But be ye sure that ye mistake not the cause and ground of your Testimony. Call not the coldness of the soul religion; nor put the *bigot* in the place of the *Christian*.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

O ye partial ministers of your own acknowledged principles! If the bearing of arms be sinful, the first going to war must be more so, by all the difference between wilful attack and unavoidable defense.

Wherefore, if ye really preach from conscience, and mean not to make a political hobby-horse of your religion, convince the world thereof by proclaiming your doctrine to our enemies, *for they likewise bear ARMS.* Give us proof of your sincerity by publishing it at St. James's, to the commanders-in-chief at Boston, to admirals and captains who are piratically ravaging our coasts, and to all the murdering miscreants who are acting in authority under HIM whom ye profess to serve.

Had ye the honest soul of Barclay\* ye would

\* "Thou hast tasted of prosperity and adversity! thou knowest what it is to be banished thy native country, to be overruled as well as to rule, and set upon the throne; and being oppressed, thou hast reason to know how hateful the oppressor is both to God and man. If after all these warnings and advertisements, thou dost not turn unto the Lord with all thy heart, but forget Him who remembered thee in thy distress, and give up thyself to follow lust and vanity, surely great will be thy condemnation: against which snare, as well as the temptation of those who may or do feed thee, and prompt thee to evil, the most excellent and prevalent remedy will be to apply thyself to that light of Christ which shineth in the conscience, and which neither can, nor will flatter thee, nor suffer thee to be at ease in thy sins."—*Barclay's Address to Charles II.*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

preach repentance to *your king*; ye would tell the royal tyrant of his sins, and warn him of eternal ruin. Ye would not spend your partial invectives against the injured and insulted only, but, like faithful ministers, would cry aloud and *spare none*. Say not that ye are persecuted, neither endeavor to make us the authors of that reproach which ye are bringing upon yourselves; for we testify unto all men, that we do not complain against you because ye are *Quakers*, but because ye pretend *to be* and are NOT Quakers.

Alas! it seems by the particular tendency of some part of your Testimony, and other parts of your conduct, as if all sin was reduced to, and comprehended in, *the act of bearing arms*, and that by the *people only*. Ye appear to us to have mistaken party for conscience; because the general tenor of your actions wants uniformity; and it is exceedingly difficult for us to give credit to many of your pretended scruples; because we see them made by the same men, who, in the very instant that they are exclaiming against the mammon of this world, are nevertheless hunting after it with a step as steady as Time, and an appetite as keen as Death.

The quotation which ye have from Proverbs, in the third page of your Testimony, that, "when

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"; is very unwisely chosen on your part; because it amounts to a proof that the King's ways (whom ye are so desirous of supporting) do *not* please the Lord, otherwise his reign would be in peace.

I now proceed to the latter part of your Testimony, and that for which all the foregoing seems only an introduction, viz.:

"It hath ever been our judgment and principle, since we were called to profess the light of Christ Jesus, manifested in our consciences unto this day, that the setting up and putting down kings and governments, is God's peculiar prerogative; for causes best known to Himself: and that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busy-bodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin, or overturn any of them, but to pray for the King, and safety of our nation, and good of all men: that we may live a peaceful and quiet life in all godliness and honesty; *under the government which God is pleased to set over us.*"

If these are really your principles, why do ye not abide by them? Why do ye not leave that which ye call God's work to be managed by Him-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

self? These very principles instruct you to wait with patience and humility for the event of all public measures, and to receive *that event* as the divine will toward you. Wherefore, what occasion is there for your *political Testimony*, if you fully believe what it contains? And, therefore, publishing it proves that either ye do not believe what ye profess, or have not virtue enough to practise what ye believe.

The principles of Quakerism have a direct tendency to make a man the quiet and inoffensive subject of any and every government *which is set over him*. And if the setting up and putting down of kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative, He most certainly will not be robbed thereof by us; wherefore, the principle itself leads you to approve of everything which ever happened or may happen to kings, as being His work.

Oliver Cromwell thanks you. Charles, then, died not by the hands of man; and should the present proud imitator of him come to the same untimely end, the writers and publishers of the Testimony are bound by the doctrine it contains, to applaud the fact. Kings are not taken away by miracles, neither are changes in governments brought about by any other means than such as are common and human; and such as we are now

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

using. Even the dispersing of the Jews, though foretold by our Saviour, was effected by arms.

Wherefore, as ye refuse to be the means on one side, ye ought not to be meddlers on the other; but to wait the issue in silence; and, unless ye can produce divine authority to prove that the Almighty, who hath created and placed this *new* world at the greatest distance it could possibly stand, East and West, from every part of the old, doth, nevertheless, disapprove of its being independent of the corrupt and abandoned Court of Britain; unless, I say, ye can show this, how can ye, on the ground of your principles, justify the exciting and stirring up the people “firmly to unite in the *abhorrence* of all such *writings*, and *measures*, as evince a desire and design to break off the *happy* connection we have hitherto enjoyed with the Kingdom of Great Britain, and our just and necessary subordination to the King and those who are lawfully placed in authority under him.”

What a slap in the face is here! The men who, in the very paragraph before, have quietly and passively resigned up the ordering, altering and disposal of kings and governments into the hands of God, are now recalling their principles, and putting in for a share of the busi-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ness. Is it possible that the conclusion, which is here justly quoted, can anyways follow from the doctrine laid down?

The inconsistency is too glaring not to be seen; the absurdity too great not to be laughed at; and such as could only have been made by those whose understandings were darkened by the narrow and crabbed spirit of a despairing political party; for ye are not to be considered as the whole body of Quakers, but only as a factional and fractional part thereof.

Here ends the examination of your Testimony (which I call upon no man to abhor, as ye have done, but only to read and judge of fairly); to which I subjoin the following remark: “That the setting up and putting down of kings” must certainly mean the making him a king, who is yet not so, and the making him no king who is already one. And pray what hath this to do in the present case? We neither mean to *set up* nor to *put down*, neither to *make* nor to *unmake*, but to have nothing *to do* with them. Wherefore, your Testimony, in whatever light it is viewed, serves only to dishonor your judgment, and for many other reasons had better have been left alone than published.

*First.* Because it tends to the decrease and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

reproach of all religion whatever, and is of the utmost danger to society, to make it a party in political disputes.

*Secondly.* Because it exhibits a body of men, numbers of whom disavow the publishing of political testimonies, as being concerned therein and approvers thereof.

*Thirdly.* Because it hath a tendency to undo that continental harmony and friendship which yourselves, by your late liberal and charitable donations, have lent a hand to establish; and the preservation of which is of the utmost consequence to us all.

And here, without anger or resentment, I bid you farewell. Sincerely wishing, that as men and Christians, ye may always fully and uninterruptedlly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be in your turn the means of securing it to others; but that the example which ye have unwiseley set, of mingling religion with politics, *may be disavowed and reprobated by every inhabitant of AMERICA.*

## **MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS**



## AFRICAN SLAVERY IN AMERICA\*

Messrs. BRADFORD,

*Please to insert the following, and oblige  
yours,*

A. B.

To AMERICANS.

**T**HAT some desperate wretches should be willing to steal and enslave men by violence and murder for gain, is rather lamentable than strange. But that many civilized, nay, Christianized people should approve, and be concerned in the savage practise, is surprising; and still persist, though it has been so often proved contrary to the light of nature, to every principle of justice and humanity, and even good policy, by a succession of eminent men,† and several late publications.

Our traders in men (*an unnatural commodity!*) must know the wickedness of that slave-trade, if they attend to reasoning, or the dictates of their own hearts; and such as shun and stifle all these, wilfully sacrifice conscience, and the character of integrity to that golden idol.

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal and Weekly Advertiser*,  
March 8, 1775.

† Dr. Ames, Baxter, Durham, Locke, Carmichael, Hutcheson,  
Montesquieu, and Blackstone, Wallace, etc., etc., Bishop of  
Gloucester.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

The managers of that trade themselves, and others, testify, that many of these African nations inhabit fertile countries, are industrious farmers, enjoy plenty, and lived quietly, averse to war, before the Europeans debauched them with liquors, and bribed them against one another, and that these inoffensive people are brought into slavery, by stealing them, tempting kings to sell subjects, which they can have no right to do, and hiring one tribe to war against another, in order to catch prisoners. By such wicked and inhuman ways the English are said to enslave toward one hundred thousand yearly; of which thirty thousand are supposed to die by barbarous treatment in the first year; besides all that are slain in the unnatural wars excited to take them. So much innocent blood have the managers and supporters of this inhuman trade to answer for to the common Lord of all!

Many of these were not prisoners of war, and redeemed from savage conquerors, as some plead; and they who were such prisoners, the English, who promote the war for that very end, are the guilty authors of their being so; and if they were redeemed, as is alleged, they would owe nothing to the redeemer but what he paid for them.

They show as little reason as conscience who

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

put the matter by with saying—"Men, in some cases, are lawfully made slaves, and why may not these?" So men, in some cases, are lawfully put to death, deprived of their goods, without their consent; may any man, therefore, be treated so, without any conviction of desert? Nor is this plea mended by adding—"They are set forth to us as slaves, and we buy them without further inquiry, let the sellers see to it."

Such men may as well join with a known band of robbers, buy their ill-got goods, and help on the trade; ignorance is no more pleadable in one case than the other; the sellers plainly own how they obtain them. But none can lawfully buy without evidence that they are not concurring with men-stealers; and as the true owner has a right to reclaim his goods that were stolen, and sold; so the slave, who is proper owner of his freedom, has a right to reclaim it, however often sold.

Most shocking of all is alleging the sacred Scriptures to favor this wicked practise. One would have thought none but infidel cavilers would endeavor to make them appear contrary to the plain dictates of natural light, and conscience, in a matter of common justice and humanity; which they cannot be. Such worthy men, as referred to before, judged other ways; Mr. Bax-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ter declared, *the slave-traders should be called devils, rather than Christians; and that it is a heinous crime to buy them.* But some say, “*the practise was permitted to the Jews.*” To which may be replied,

1. The example of the Jews, in many things, may not be imitated by us; they had not only orders to cut off several nations altogether, but if they were obliged to war with others, and conquered them, to cut off every male; they were suffered to use polygamy and divorces, and other things utterly unlawful to us under clearer light.

2. The plea is, in a great measure, false; they had no permission to catch and enslave people who never injured them.

3. Such arguments ill become us, *since the time of Reformation came*, under Gospel light. All distinctions of nations and privileges of one above others, are ceased; Christians are taught to account all men their neighbors; and love their neighbors as themselves; and do to all men as they would be done by; to do good to all men; and man-stealing is ranked with enormous crimes. Is the barbarous enslaving of our inoffensive neighbors, and treating them like wild beasts subdued by force, reconcilable with all these *Divine precepts?* Is this doing to them as we would desire

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

they should do to us? If they could carry off and enslave some thousands of us, would we think it just? One would almost wish they could for once; it might convince more than reason, or the Bible.

As much in vain, perhaps, will they search ancient history for examples of the modern slave-trade. Too many nations enslaved the prisoners they took in war. But to go to nations with whom there is no war, who have no way provoked, without further design of conquest, purely to catch inoffensive people, like wild beasts, for slaves, is an height of outrage against humanity and justice, that seems left by heathen nations to be practised by pretended Christians. How shameful are all attempts to color and excuse it!

As these people are not convicted of forfeiting freedom, they have still a natural, perfect right to it; and the governments, whenever they come, should, in justice set them free, and punish those who hold them in slavery.

So monstrous is the making and keeping them slaves at all, abstracted from the barbarous usage they suffer, and the many evils attending the practise; as selling husbands away from wives, children from parents, and from each other, in violation of sacred and natural ties; and opening

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the way for adulteries, incests, and many shocking consequences, for all of which the guilty masters must answer to the final Judge.

If the slavery of the parents be unjust, much more is their children's; if the parents were justly slaves, yet the children are born free; this is the natural, perfect right of all mankind; they are nothing but a just recompense to those who bring them up. And as much less is commonly spent on them than others, they have a right, in justice, to be proportionably sooner free.

Certainly one may, with as much reason and decency, plead for murder, robbery, lewdness, and barbarity, as for this practise; they are not more contrary to the natural dictates of conscience, and feelings of humanity; nay, they are all comprehended in it.

But the chief design of this paper is not to disprove it, which many have sufficiently done; but to entreat Americans to consider.

1. With what consistency, or decency they complain so loudly of attempts to enslave them, while they hold so many hundred thousands in slavery; and annually enslave many thousands more, without any pretense of authority, or claim upon them?

2. How just, how suitable to our crime is the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

punishment with which Providence threatens us? We have enslaved multitudes, and shed much innocent blood in doing it; and now are threatened with the same. And while other evils are confessed, and bewailed, why not this especially, and publicly; than which no other vice, of all others, has brought so much guilt on the land?

3. Whether, then, all ought not immediately to discontinue and renounce it, with grief and abhorrence? Should not every society bear testimony against it, and account obstinate persisters in it bad men, enemies to their country, and exclude them from fellowship; as they often do for much lesser faults?

4. The great question may be—What should be done with those who are enslaved already? To turn the old and infirm free, would be injustice and cruelty; they who enjoyed the labors of their better days should keep, and treat them humanely. As to the rest, let prudent men, with the assistance of legislatures, determine what is practicable for masters, and best for them.

Perhaps some could give them lands upon reasonable rent, some, employing them in their labor still, might give them some reasonable allowance for it; so as all may have some property, and fruits of their labors at their own disposal,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

and be encouraged to industry; the family may live together, and enjoy the natural satisfaction of exercising relative affections and duties, with civil protection, and other advantages, like fellow-men.

Perhaps they might sometime form useful barrier settlements on the frontiers. Thus they may become interested in the public welfare, and assist in promoting it; instead of being dangerous, as now they are, should any enemy promise them a better condition.

5. The past treatment of Africans must naturally fill them with abhorrence of Christians; lead them to think our religion would make them more inhuman savages, if they embraced it; thus the gain of that trade has been pursued in opposition to the Redeemer's cause, and the happiness of men: Are we not, therefore, bound in duty to Him and to them to repair these injuries, as far as possible, by taking some proper measures to instruct, not only the slaves here, but the Africans in their own countries? Primitive Christians labored always to spread their *Divine Religion*; and this is equally our duty while there is an heathen nation: But what singular obligations are we under to these injured people!

These are the sentiments of

JUSTICE AND HUMANITY.

## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GENERAL WOLFE AND GENERAL GAGE IN A WOOD NEAR BOSTON\*

**G**EN. WOLFE. Welcome my old friend, to this retreat.

*Gen. Gage.* I am glad to see you my dear Mr. Wolfe, but what has brought you back again to this world?

*Gen. Wolfe.* I am sent by a group of British heroes to remonstrate with you upon your errand to this place. You are come upon a business unworthy a British soldier, and a freeman. You have come here to deprive your fellow subjects of their liberty.

*Gen. Gage.* God forbid! I am come here to execute the orders of my Sovereign—a Prince of unbounded wisdom and goodness, and who aims at no higher honor than that of being the King of a free people.

*Gen. Wolfe.* Strange language from a British soldier! I honor the Crown of Great Britain as an essential part of her excellent Constitution. I served a Sovereign to whom the impartial voice of posterity has ascribed the justice of the man as

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, January 4, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

well as the magnanimity of a king, and yet such was the free spirit of the troops under my command, that I could never animate them with a proper martial spirit without setting before them the glorious objects of their King and their country.

*Gen. Gage.* The orders of my Sovereign have been sanctified by the Parliament of Great Britain. All the wisdom and liberty of the whole empire are collected in that august assembly. My troops therefore cannot want the same glorious motives which animated yours, in the present expedition. They will fight for their country as well as their King.

*Gen. Wolfe.* The wisest assemblies of men are as liable as individuals to corruption and error. The greatest ravages which have ever been committed upon the liberty and happiness of mankind have been by weak and corrupted republics. The American colonies are entitled to all the privileges of British subjects. Equality of liberty is the glory of every Briton. He does not forfeit it by crossing the ocean. He carries it with him into the most distant parts of the world, because he carries with him the immutable laws of nature. A Briton or an American ceases to be a British subject when he ceases to be gov-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

erned by rulers chosen or approved of by himself. This is the essence of liberty and of the British Constitution.

*Gen. Gage.* The inhabitants of the province of Massachusetts Bay have not only thrown off the jurisdiction of the British Parliament, but they are disaffected to the British Crown. They cannot even bear with that small share of regal power and grandeur which have been delegated to the governors of this province. They traduced Sir Francis Bernard, and petitioned the King to remove Mr. Hutchinson from the seat of government. But their opposition to my administration has arisen to open rebellion.

They have refused to obey my proclamations. They have assembled and entered into associations to eat no mutton and to wear clothes manufactured in this country—they have even provided themselves with arms and ammunition, and have acquired a complete knowledge of the military exercises, in direct opposition to my proclamations.

*Gen. Wolfe.* The inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay were once a brave and *loyal* people. If they are disaffected to His present Majesty, it is because his ministers have sent counterfeit impressions of his royal virtues to govern them.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Bernard and Hutchinson must have been a composition of all the base and wicked qualities in human nature to have diminished the loyalty of those illustrious subjects, or weakened their devotions to every part of the British Constitution.—I must add here that the late proceedings of the British Parliament toward the American colonists have reached the British heroes in Elysium, and have produced a suspension of their happiness.

The Quebec Bill in a particular manner has roused their resentment. It was once the glory of Englishmen to draw the sword only in defense of liberty and the Protestant religion, or to extend the blessings of both to their unhappy neighbors. These godlike motives reconciled me to all the hardships of that campaign which ended in the reduction of Canada. These godlike motives likewise reconciled me to the horror I felt in being obliged to shed the blood of those brave Frenchmen, who opposed me on the plains of Abraham.

I rejoiced less in the hour of my death, in the honor of my victory, than in the glory of having communicated to an enslaved people the glorious privileges of an English constitution. While my fellow soldiers hailed me as their con-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

queror, I exulted only in being their deliverer. But popery and French laws in Canada are but a part of that system of despotism, which has been prepared for the colonies.

The edicts of the British Parliament (for they want the sanction of British laws) which relate to the province of Massachusetts Bay are big with destruction to the whole British Empire. I come therefore in the name of Blackeney—Cumberland—Granby—and an illustrious band of English heroes to whom the glory of Old England is still dear, to beg you to have no hand in the execution of them. Remember, Sir, you are a man as well as a soldier. You did not give up your privileges as a citizen when you put on your sword. British soldiers are not machines, to be animated only with the voice of a minister of state. They disdain those ideas of submission which preclude them from the liberty of thinking for themselves, and degrade them to an equality with a war horse, or an elephant.

If you value the sweets of peace and liberty—if you have any regard to the glory of the British name, and if you prefer the society of Grecian, Roman, and British heroes in the world of spirits, to the company of Jeffries, Kirk, and other royal executioners, I conjure you im-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

mediately to resign your commission. Assign the above reasons to your sovereign for your conduct, and you will have the *sole* glory of performing an action which would do honor to an angel. You will restore perpetual harmony between Britain and her colonies.

## THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA \*

IN a country whose reigning character is the love of science, it is somewhat strange that the channels of communication should continue so narrow and limited. The weekly papers are at present the only vehicles of public information. Convenience and necessity prove that the opportunities of acquiring and communicating knowledge ought always to enlarge with the circle of population.

America has now outgrown the state of infancy; her strength and commerce make large advances to manhood; and science in all its branches has not only blossomed, but even ripened on the soil. The cottages as it were of yesterday have grown to villages, and the villages to cities; and while proud antiquity, like a skeleton in rags, parades the streets of other nations, their genius, as if sickened and disgusted with the phantom, comes hither for recovery.

The present enlarged and improved state of things gives every encouragement which the editor of a new magazine can reasonably hope for.

\* Introductory of the *Pennsylvania Magazine, or American Museum*, Philadelphia, published by Robert Aitkin.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

The failure of former ones cannot be drawn as a parallel now. Change of times add propriety to new measures. In the early days of colonization, when a whisper was almost sufficient to have negotiated all our internal concerns, the publishing even of a newspaper would have been premature. Those times are past; and population has established both their use and their credit. But their plan being almost wholly devoted to news and commerce, affords but a scanty residence to the Muses. Their path lies wide of the field of science, and has left a rich and unexplored region for new adventurers.

It has always been the opinion of the learned and curious, that a magazine, when properly conducted, is the nursery of genius; and by constantly accumulating new matter, becomes a kind of market for wit and utility. The opportunities which it affords to men of abilities to communicate their studies, kindle up a spirit of invention and emulation. An unexercised genius soon contracts a kind of mossiness, which not only checks its growth, but abates its natural vigor. Like an untenanted house it falls into decay, and frequently ruins the possessor.

The British magazines, at their commencement, were the repositories of ingenuity. They

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

are now retailers of tale and nonsense. From elegance they sunk to simplicity, from simplicity to folly, and from folly to voluptuousness. The *Gentleman's*, the *London*, and the *Universal* magazines, bear yet some marks of their originality; but the *Town and Country*, the *Covent-Garden*, and the *Westminster*, are no better than incentives to profligacy and dissipation. They have added to the dissolution of manners, and supported Venus against the Muses.

America yet inherits a large portion of her first-imported virtue. Degeneracy is here almost a useless word. Those who are conversant with Europe would be tempted to believe that even the air of the Atlantic disagrees with the constitution of foreign vices; if they survive the voyage, they either expire on their arrival, or linger away in an incurable consumption. There is a happy something in the climate of America, which disarms them of all their power both of infection and attraction.

But while we give no encouragement to the importation of foreign vices, we ought to be equally as careful not to create any. A vice begotten might be worse than a vice imported. The latter, depending on favor, would be a sycophant; the other, by pride of birth, would be a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tyrant. To the one we should be dupes, to the other slaves.

There is nothing which obtains so general an influence over the manners and morals of a people as the Press; from *that*, as from a fountain, the streams of vice or virtue are poured forth over a country. And of all publications, none is more calculated to improve or infect than a periodical one. All others have their rise and their exit; but *this* renews the pursuit. If it has an evil tendency, it debauches by the power of repetition; if a good one, it obtains favor by the gracefulness of soliciting it. Like a lover, it woos its mistress with unabated ardor, nor gives up the pursuit without a conquest.

The two capital supports of a magazine are utility and entertainment. The first is a boundless path, the other an endless spring. To suppose that arts and sciences are exhausted subjects, is doing them a kind of dishonor. The divine mechanism of creation reproves such folly, and shows us by comparison, the imperfection of our most refined inventions. I cannot believe that this species of vanity is peculiar to the present age only. I have no doubt but that it existed before the Flood, and even in the wildest ages of antiquity. 'Tis folly we have inherited,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

not created; and the discoveries which every day produces, have greatly contributed to dispossess us of it. Improvement and the world will expire together. And till that period arrives, we may plunder the mine, but can never exhaust it! That "*We have found out everything,*" has been the motto of every age.

Let our ideas travel a little into antiquity, and we shall find larger portions of it than now; and so unwilling were our ancestors to descend from this mountain of perfection, that when any new discovery exceeded the common standard, the discoverer was believed to be in alliance with the devil. It was not the ignorance of the age only, but the vanity of it, which rendered it dangerous to be ingenious.

The man who first planned and erected a tenable hut, with a hole for the smoke to pass, and the light to enter, was perhaps called an able architect, but he who first improved it with a chimney, could be no less than a prodigy; yet had the same man been so unfortunate as to have embellished it with glass windows, he might probably have been burned for a magician.

Our fancies would be highly diverted could we look back, and behold a circle of original Indians haranguing on the sublime perfection of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the age. Yet 'tis not impossible but future times may exceed us almost as much as we have exceeded them.

I would wish to extirpate the least remains of this impolitic vanity. It has a direct tendency to unbrace the nerves of invention, and is peculiarly hurtful to young colonies. A magazine can never want matter in America, if the inhabitants will do justice to their own abilities. Agriculture and manufactures owe much of their improvement in England, to hints first thrown out in some of their magazines. Gentlemen whose abilities enabled them to make experiments, frequently chose that method of communication, on account of its convenience.

And why should not the same spirit operate in America? I have no doubt of seeing, in a little time, an American magazine full of more useful matter than I ever saw an English one. Because we are not exceeded in abilities, have a more extensive field for inquiry; and, whatever may be our political state, *Our happiness will always depend upon ourselves.*

Something useful will always arise from exercising the invention, though perhaps, like the witch of Endor, we shall raise up a being we did not expect. We owe many of our noblest dis-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

coveries more to accident than wisdom. In quest of a pebble we have found a diamond, and returned enriched with the treasure.

Such happy accidents give additional encouragement to the making experiments; and the convenience which a magazine affords of collecting and conveying them to the public, enhances their utility. Where this opportunity is wanting, many little inventions, the forerunners of improvement, are suffered to expire on the spot that produced them; and, as an elegant writer beautifully expresses on another occasion,

“They waste their sweetness on the desert air.”—Gray.

In matters of humor and entertainment there can be no reason to apprehend a deficiency. Wit is naturally a volunteer, delights in action, and under proper discipline is capable of great execution. ’Tis a perfect master in the art of bush-fighting; and though it attacks with more subtlety than science, has often defeated a whole regiment of heavy artillery.—Though I have rather exceeded the line of gravity in this description of wit, I am unwilling to dismiss it without being a little more serious.—’Tis a qualification which, like the passions, has a natural wildness that requires governing. Left to itself,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

it soon overflows its banks, mixes with common filth, and brings disrepute on the fountain. We have many valuable springs of it in America, which at present run purer streams, than the generality of it in other countries. In France and Italy, 'tis froth highly fomented. In England it has much of the same spirit, but rather a browner complexion.

European wit is one of the worst articles we can import. It has an intoxicating power with it, which debauches the very vitals of chastity, and gives a false coloring to everything it censures or defends. We soon grow fatigued with the excess, and withdraw like gluttons sickened with intemperance. On the contrary, how happily are the sallies of innocent humor calculated to amuse and sweeten the vacancy of business! We enjoy the harmless luxury without surfeiting, and strengthen the spirits by relaxing them.

The Press has not only a great influence over our manners and morals, but contributes largely to our pleasures; and a magazine when properly enriched, is very conveniently calculated for this purpose. Voluminous works weary the patience, but here we are invited by conciseness and variety. As I have formerly received much pleasure from perusing these kind of publications, I wish

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the *present* success; and have no doubt of seeing a proper diversity blended so agreeably together, as to furnish out an *Olio* worthy of the company for whom it is designed.

I consider a magazine as a kind of bee-hive, which both allures the swarm, and provides room to store their sweets. Its division into cells, gives every bee a province of its own; and though they all produce honey, yet perhaps they differ in their taste for flowers, and extract with greater dexterity from one than from another. Thus, we are not all philosophers, all artists, nor all poets.

## USEFUL AND ENTERTAINING HINTS\*

“The real value of a thing,  
Is as much money as 'twill bring.”

**I**N the possession of the Philadelphia Library Company is a cabinet of fossils,† with several specimens of earth, clay, sand, etc., with some account of each, and where brought from.

I have always considered these kinds of researches as productive of many advantages, and in a new country they are particularly so. As subjects for speculation, they afford entertainment to the curious; but as objects of utility they merit a closer attention. The same materials which delight the fossilist, enrich the manufacturer, and the merchant. While the one is scientifically examining their structure and composition, the others, by industry and commerce, are transmuting them to gold. Possessed of the

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, February, 1775.

† In the catalogue it is called a collection of American fossils, etc., but a considerable part of them are foreign ones. I presume that the collector, in order to judge the better of such as he might discover here, made first a collection of such foreign ones whose value were known, in order to compare by: as his design seems rather bent toward discovering the treasures of America than merely to make a collection.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

power of pleasing, they gratify on both sides; the one contemplates their *natural* beauties in the cabinet, the others, their *re-created* ones in the coffer.

'Tis by the researches of the virtuoso that the hidden parts of the earth are brought to light, and from his discoveries of its qualities, the potter, the glassmaker, and numerous other artists, are enabled to furnish us with their productions. Artists considered *merely* as such, would have made but a slender progress, had they not been led on by the enterprising spirit of the curious. I am unwilling to dismiss this remark without entering my protest against that unkind, ungrateful, and impolitic custom of ridiculing unsuccessful experiments. And of informing those unwise or overwise pasquinaders, that half the felicities they enjoy sprung originally from generous curiosity.

Were a man to propose or set out to bore his lands as a carpenter does a board, he might probably bring on himself a shower of witticisms; and though, he could not be jested at for *building castles in the air*, yet many *magnanimous* laughs might break forth at his expense, and vociferously predict the explosion of a mine in his subterraneous pursuits.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

I am led to this reflection by the present domestic state of America, because it will unavoidably happen that before we can arrive at that perfection of things which other nations have acquired, many hopes will fail, many whimsical attempts will become fortunate, and many reasonable ones end in air and expense. *The degree of improvement which America has already arrived at is unparalleled and astonishing, but 'tis miniature to what she will one day boast of, if heaven continue her happiness.*

We have nearly one whole region yet unexplored; I mean the internal region of the earth. By industry and tillage we have acquired a considerable knowledge of what America will *produce*, but very little of what it *contains*. The bowels of the earth have been only slightly inquired into. We seem to content ourselves with such parts of it as are absolutely necessary, and cannot well be imported; as brick, stone, etc., but have gone very little further, except in the article of iron. The glass and the pottery manufactures are yet very imperfect, and will continue so, till some curious researcher finds out the proper material.

Copper, lead and tin articles, valuable both in their simple state, and as being the component

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

parts of other metals (viz. brass and pewter) are at present but little known throughout the continent in their mineral form: yet I doubt not, but very valuable mines of them are daily traveled over in the western parts of America. Perhaps a few feet of surface conceals a treasure sufficient to enrich a kingdom.

The value of the interior part of the earth (like ourselves) cannot be judged certainly of by the surface, neither do the corresponding strata lie with the unvariable order of the colors of the rainbow, and if they ever did (which I do not believe) age and misfortune have now broken in upon their union; earthquakes, deluges, and volcanoes have so disunited and reunited them, that in their present state they appear like a world in ruins.—Yet the ruins are beautiful.—The caverns, museums of antiquities.

Tho' nature is gay, polite, and generous abroad, she is sullen, rude, and niggardly at home. Return the visit, and she admits you with all the suspicions of a miser, and all the reluctance of an antiquated beauty retired to replenish her charms. Bred up in antediluvian notions, she has not yet acquired the European taste of receiving visitants in her dressing-room: she locks and bolts up her private recesses with extraordi-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

nary care, as if not only resolved to preserve her hoards, but to conceal her age, and hide the remains of a face that was young and lovely in the days of Adam.

He that would view nature in her undress, and partake of her internal treasures, must proceed with the resolution of a robber, if not a ravisher. She gives no invitation to follow her to the cavern.—The external earth makes no proclamation of the interior stores, but leaves to chance and industry, the discovery of the whole. In such gifts as nature can annually recreate, she is noble and profuse, and entertains the whole world with the interest of her fortunes; but watches over the capital with the care of a miser.

Her gold and jewels lie concealed in the earth, in caves of utter darkness; and hoards of wealth, heaps upon heaps, mold in the chests, like the riches of a necromancer's cell. It must be very pleasant to an adventurous speculist to make excursions into these Gothic regions; and in his travels he may possibly come to a cabinet locked up in some rocky vault, whose treasures shall reward his toil, and enable him to shine on his return, as splendidly as nature herself.

By a small degree of attention to the order and origin of things, we shall perceive, that

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

though the *surface* of the earth produce us the *necessaries* of life, yet 'tis from the mine we extract the *conveniences* thereof. Our houses would diminish to wigwams, furnished in the Indian style, and ourselves resemble the building, were it not for the ores of the earth. Agriculture and manufactures would wither away for want of tools and implements, and commerce stand still for want of materials. The beasts of the field would elude our power, and the birds of the air get beyond our reach.

Our dominion would shrink to a narrow circle, and the mind itself, partaking of the change, would contract its prospects, and lessen into almost animal instinct. Take away but the single article of iron, and half the felicities of life fall with it. Little as we may prize this common ore, the loss of it would *cut* deeper than the use of it: And by the way of laughing off misfortunes 'tis easy to prove, by this method of investigation, that *an iron age is better than a golden one*.

Since so great a proportion of our enjoyments is drawn from the mine, it is certainly an evidence of our prudence to inquire and know what our possessions are. Every man's landed property extends to the [center] of the earth. Why then should he sit down contented with a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

part, and practise upon his estate those fashionable follies in life, which prefer the superfice to the solid? Curiosity alone, should the thought occur conveniently, would move an active mind to examine (tho' not to the bottom) at least to a considerable depth.

The propriety and reasonableness of these internal inquiries are continually pointed out to us by numberless occurrences. Accident is almost every day turning out some new secret from the earth. How often has the plow-share or the spade broken open a treasure, which for ages, perhaps forever, had lain just beneath the surface? And tho' every estate have not mines of gold or silver, yet they may contain some strata of valuable earth, proper for manufactures; and if they have not those, there is a great probability of their having chalk, marl, or some rich soil proper for manure, which only requires to be removed to the surface.

I have been informed of some land in England being raised to four times its former value by the discovery of a chalk or marl pit, in digging a hole to fix a post in; and in embanking a meadow in the Jerseys, the laborers threw out with the soil a fine, blue, powderly earth, resembling indigo, which, when mixed with oil, was

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

used for paint. I imagine the vein is now exhausted.

Many valuable ores, clays, etc., appear in such rude forms in their natural state, as not even to excite *curiosity*, much less *attention*. A true knowledge of their different value can only be obtained by experiment: As soil proper for manure, they may be judged of by the planter; but as matter, they come under the inquiry of the philosopher. This leads me to reflect with inexpressible pleasure, on the numberless benefits arising to a community, by the institution of societies for promoting useful knowledge.

The American Philosophical Society, like the Royal Society in England, by having public spirit for its support, and public good for its object, is a treasure we ought to glory in. Here the defective knowledge of the individual is supplied by the common stock. Societies, without endangering private fortunes, are enabled to proceed in their inquiries by analysis and experiment. But individuals are seldom furnished with conveniences for so doing, and generally rest their opinion on reasonable conjecture.

I presume that were samples of different soils from different parts of America, presented to the Society for their inspection and examination, it

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

would greatly facilitate our knowledge of the internal earth, and give a new spring both to agriculture and manufactures.

These hints are not intended to lament any loss of time, or remissness in the pursuit of useful knowledge, but to furnish matter for future studies; that while we glory in what we are, we may not neglect what we *are to be*.

Of the present state we may justly say, that no nation under heaven ever struck out in so short a time, and with so much spirit and reputation, into the labyrinth of art and science; and that, not in the *acquisition* of knowledge only, but in the happy advantages flowing *from* it. The world does not at this day exhibit a parallel, neither can history produce its equal.

ATLANTICUS.

*Philadelphia, Feb. 10.*

## NEW ANECDOTES OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT\*

**I**N one of those calm and gloomy days, which have a strange effect in disposing the mind to pensiveness, I quitted the busy town and withdrew into the country.

As I passed toward the Schuylkill, my ideas enlarged with the prospect, and sprung from place to place with an agility for which nature had not a simile. Even the eye is a loiterer, when compared with the rapidity of the thoughts. Before I could reach the ferry, I had made the tour of the creation, and paid a regular visit to almost every country under the sun; and while I was crossing the river, I passed the Styx, and made large excursions into the shadowy regions; but my ideas relanded with my person, and, taking a new flight, inspected the state of things unborn. This happy wildness of imagination makes a man a lord of the world, and discovers to him the value and the vanity of all it possesses.

Having discharged the two terrestrial Charons, who ferried me over the Schuylkill, I took up my staff and walked into the woods. Every-

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, February, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

thing conspired to hush me into a pleasing kind of melancholy—the trees seemed to sleep—and the air hung round me with such unbreathing silence, as if listening to my very thoughts. Perfectly at rest from care or business, I suffered my ideas to pursue their own unfettered fancies; and in less time than what is required to express it in, they had again passed the Styx and toured many miles into the new country.

As the servants of great men always imitate their masters abroad, so my ideas, habitting themselves in my likeness, figured away with all the consequence of the person they belonged to; and calling themselves when united, I and *Me*, wherever they went, brought me on their return the following anecdotes of Alexander, viz.

Having a mind to see in what manner Alexander lived in the Plutonian world, I crossed the Styx (without the help of Charon, for the dead only are his fare), and inquired of a melancholy looking shade, who was sitting on the banks of the river, if he could give me any account of him, *Yonder he comes*, replied the shade, *get out of the way or you'll be run over*. Turning myself round I saw a grand equipage rolling toward me, which filled the whole avenue.

Bless me! thought I, the gods still continue

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

this man in his insolence and pomp! The chariot was drawn by eight horses in golden harness, and the whole represented his triumphal return, after he had conquered the world. It passed me with a splendor I had never seen before, and shined so luminously up into the country, that I discovered innumerable shades sitting under the trees, which before were invisible.

As there were two persons in the chariot equally splendid, I could not distinguish which was Alexander, and on requiring that information of the shade, who still stood by, he replied, *Alexander is not there.* Did you not, continued I, tell me that Alexander was coming, and bid me get out of the way? *Yes,* answered the shade, because he was the forehorse on the side next to us. Horse! I mean Alexander the Emperor. *I mean the same,* replied the shade, for whatever he was on the other side of the water is nothing now, he is a HORSE here; and not always that, for when he is apprehensive that a good licking is intended for him, he watches his opportunity to roll out of the stable in the shape of a piece of dung, or in any other disguise he can escape by. On this information I turned instantly away, not being able to bear the thought

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of such astonishing degradation, notwithstanding the aversion I have to his character.

But curiosity got the better of my compassion, and having a mind to see what sort of a figure the conqueror of the world cut in the stable, I directed my flight thither; he was just returned with the rest of the horses from the journey, and the groom was rubbing him down with a large furz bush, but turning himself round to get a still larger and more prickly one that was newly brought in, Alexander catched the opportunity, and instantly disappeared, on which I quitted the place, lest I should be suspected of stealing him.

When I had reached the banks of the river, and was preparing to take my flight over, I perceived that I had picked up a *bug* among the Plutonian gentry, and thinking it was needless to increase the breed on this side of the water, was going to dispatch it, when the little wretch screamed out, *Spare Alexander the GREAT*. On which I withdrew the violence I was offering to his person, and holding up the Emperor between my finger and thumb, he exhibited a most contemptible figure of the downfall of tyrant greatness.

Affected with a mixture of concern and compassion (*which he was always a stranger to*)

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

I suffered him to nibble on a pimple that was newly risen on my hand, in order to refresh him; after which I placed him on a tree to hide him, but a tomtit coming by chopped him up with as little ceremony as he put whole kingdoms to the sword. On which I took my flight, reflecting with pleasure—That I was not ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

ESOP.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF LORD CLIVE\*

**A**H! The tale is told—The scene is ended—and the curtain falls. As an emblem of the vanity of all earthly pomp, let his monument be a globe, but be that globe a bubble; let his Effigy be a man walking round it in his sleep; and let Fame, in the character of a shadow, inscribe his honors on the air.

I view him but as yesterday on the burning plains of Plassy,† doubtful of life, health, or victory. I see him in the instant when “*To be or not to be,*” were equal chances to a human eye. To be a lord or a slave, to return loaded with the spoils, or remain mingled with the dust of India.—Did necessity always justify the severity of a conqueror, the rude tongue of censure would be silent, and however painfully he might look back on scenes of horror, the pensive reflection would not alarm him.

Though his feelings suffered, his conscience would be acquitted. The sad remembrance would

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, March, 1775.

† Battle of Plassy, in the East Indies, where Lord Clive, at that time Colonel Clive, acquired an immense fortune, and from which place his title is taken.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

move serenely, and leave the mind without a wound.—But Oh India! thou loud proclaimer of European cruelties, thou bloody monument of unnecessary deaths, be tender in the day of inquiry, and show a Christian world thou canst suffer and forgive.

Departed from India, and loaded with plunder, I see him doubling the Cape and looking wistfully to Europe. I see him contemplating on years of pleasure, and gratifying his ambition with expected honors. I see his arrival pompously announced in every newspaper, his eager eye rambling thro' the crowd in quest of homage, and his ear listening lest an applause should escape him. Happily for him he arrived before his *fame*, and the short interval was a time of rest.

From the crowd I follow him to the Court, I see him enveloped in the sunshine of sovereign favor, rivaling the great in honors, the proud in splendor, and the rich in wealth. From the Court I trace him to the country, his equipage moves like a camp; every village bell proclaims his coming; the wondering peasants admire his pomp, and his heart runs over with joy.

But, alas! not satisfied with uncountable thousands, I accompany him *again* to India. I mark

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the variety of countenances which appear at his landing. Confusion spreads the news. Every passion seems alarmed. The wailing widow, the crying orphan, and the childless parent remember and lament; the rival nabobs court his favor; the rich dread his power, and the poor his severity. Fear and terror march like pioneers before his camp, murder and rapine accompany it, famine and wretchedness follow in the rear.

Resolved on accumulating an unbounded fortune, he enters into all the schemes of war, treaty, and intrigue. The British sword is set up for sale; the heads of contending nabobs are offered at a price, and the bribe taken from both sides. Thousands of men or money are trifles in an India bargain. The field is an empire, and the treasure almost without end. The wretched inhabitants are glad to compound for offenses never committed, and to purchase at any rate the privilege to breathe; while he, the sole lord of their lives and fortunes, disposes of either as he pleases, and prepares for Europe.\*

\* In April, 1773, a Committee of the House of Commons, under the name of the Select Committee, were appointed by the House to inquire into the state of the East India affairs, and the conduct of the several governors of Bengal. The Committee having gone through the examinations, General Burgoyne, the chairman, prefaced their report to the House, informing them, "that the reports contained accounts shocking to human nature,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Uncommon fortunes require an uncommon date of life to enjoy them in. The usual period is spent in preparing to live. And unless nature prolongs the time, fortune bestows her excess of favors in vain.

The conqueror of the East, having nothing more to expect from the one, has all his court to make to the other. Anxiety for wealth gives place to anxiety for life; and wisely recollecting that the sea is no respecter of persons, resolves on that the most infamous designs had been carried into execution by perfidy and murder." He recapitulated the wretched situation of the East-Indian princes, who held their dignities on the precarious condition of being the highest bribers.

No claim, however just on their part, he said, could be admitted without being introduced with enormous sums of rupees, nor any prince suffered to reign long who did not quadrate with this idea; and that Lord Clive, over and above the enormous sums he might with some appearance of justice lay claim to, had obtained others to which he could have no title.

He (General Burgoyne) therefore moved, "That it appears to this House, that Robert Lord Clive, Baron of Plassy, about the time of deposing Surajah Dowla, Nabob of Bengal, and establishing Meer Jaffier in his room, did, through the influence of the power with which he was intrusted, as member of the Select Committee in India, and Commander-in-chief of the British forces there, obtain and possess himself of two lacs of rupees, as member of the Select Committee; a further sum of two lacs and 80,000 rupees, as member of the Select Committee; a further sum of two lacs of rupees, as Commander-in-chief; a further sum of sixteen lacs of rupees, or more, under the denomination of *private donations*; which sums, amounting together to twenty lacs and 80,000 rupees, were of the value, in English money, of £234,000, [Equal to £340,000, Pennsylvania currency] and that in so doing, the said Robert Clive abused the powers with which he was intrusted, to the evil example of the servants of the public."

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

taking his route to Europe by land. Little beings move unseen, or unobserved, but he engrosses whole kingdoms in his march, and is gazed at like a comet. The burning desert, the pathless mountains, and the fertile valleys, are in their turns explored and passed over. No material accident distresses his progress, and England once more receives the spoiler.

How sweet is rest to the weary traveler; the retrospect heightens the enjoyment; and if the future prospect be serene, the days of ease and happiness are arrived. An uninquiring observer might have been inclined to consider Lord Clive, under all the agreeable circumstances, as one whose every care was over, and who had nothing to do but sit down and say, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up in store for many years.*

The reception which he met with on his second arrival, was in every instance equal to, and in many exceeded, the honors of the first. 'Tis the peculiar temper of the English to applaud before they think. Generous of their praise, they frequently bestow it unworthily: but when once the truth arrives, the torrent stops, and rushes back again with the same violence.\*

\* Lord Clive, in the defense, which he made in the House of Commons, against the charges mentioned in the preceding note,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Scarcely had the echo of applause ceased upon

very positively insists on his innocence, and very pathetically laments his situation; and after informing the House of the thanks which he had some years before received, for the same actions which they are now endeavoring to censure him for, he says:

"After such certificates as these, Sir, am I to be brought here like a criminal, and the very best part of my conduct construed into crimes against the State? Is this the reward that is now held out to persons who have performed such important services to their country? If it is, Sir, the future consequences that will attend the execution of any important trust, committed to the persons who have the care of it, will be fatal indeed; and I am sure the noble Lord upon the Treasury Bench, whose great humanity and abilities I revere, would never have consented to the resolutions that passed the other night, if he had thought on the dreadful consequences that would attend them.

"Sir, I cannot say that I either sit or rest easy, when I find that all I have in the world is likely to be confiscated, and that no one will take my security for a shilling. These, Sir, are dreadful apprehensions to remain under, and I cannot but look upon myself as a bankrupt. I have not anything left which I can call my own, except my paternal fortune of £500 per annum, and which has been in the family for ages past. But upon this I am contented to live, and perhaps I shall find more real content of mind and happiness than in the trembling affluence of an unsettled fortune. But, Sir, I must make one more observation, that, if the definition of the Hon. Gentleman, (General Burgoyne) and of this House, is that the *State*, as expressed in these resolutions, is *quoad hoc*, the company, then, Sir, every farthing that I enjoy is granted to me. But to be called, after sixteen years have elapsed, to account for my conduct in this manner, and after an uninterrupted enjoyment of my property, to be questioned and considered as obtaining it unwarrantably, is hard indeed! and a treatment I should not think the British Senate capable of.

"But if it should be the case, I have a conscious innocence within me, that tells me that my conduct is irreproachable. *Frangas, non flectes.* They may take from me what I have; they may, as they think, make me poor, but *I will be happy!* I mean not this as my defense. My defense will be made at the bar; and before I sit down, I have one request to make to the House, that when they come to decide upon my honor, they will not forget their own."

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the ear, than the rude tongue of censure took up the tale. The newspapers, (fatal enemies to ill-gotten wealth!) began to buzz a general suspicion of his conduct, and the inquisitive public soon refined it into particulars. Every post gave a stab to his fame—a wound to his peace—and a nail to his coffin. Like spectres from the grave they haunted him in every company, and whispered murder in his ear. A life checkered with uncommon varieties is seldom a long one. Action and care will in time wear down the strongest frame, but guilt and melancholy, are poisons of quick despatch.

Say, cool deliberate reflection was the prize, though abstracted from the guilt, worthy of the pains? Ah no! Fatigued with victory he sat down to rest, and while he was recovering breath he lost it. A conqueror more fatal than himself beset him, and revenged the injuries done to India.

As a cure for avarice and ambition let us take a view of him in his latter years. Hah! what gloomy being wanders yonder? How visibly is the melancholy heart delineated on his countenance. He mourns no common care—his very steps are timed to sorrow—he trembles with a kind of mental palsy. Perhaps 'tis some broken

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

hearted parent; some David mourning for his Absalom, or some Heraclitus weeping for the world.—I hear him mutter something about wealth.—Perhaps he is poor, and hath not wherewithal to hide his head; some debtor started from his sleepless pillow, to ruminate on poverty, and ponder on the horrors of a jail. Poor man! I'll to him and relieve him. Hah! 'tis Lord Clive himself! Bless me, what a change! He makes, I see, for yonder cypress shade—fit scene for melancholy hearts!—I'll watch him there and listen to his story.

LORD CLIVE. “Can I but suffer when a beggar pities me. Erewhile I heard a ragged wretch, who every mark of poverty had on, say to a sooty sweep, ‘Ah, poor Lord Clive!’ while he the negro-colored vagrant, more mercifully cruel, cursed me in my hearing.

“There was a time when fortune, like a yielding mistress, courted me with smiles—She never waited to be told my wishes, but studied to discover them, and seemed not happy to herself, but when she had some favor to bestow. Ah! little did I think the fair enchantress would desert me thus; and after lavishing her smiles upon me, turn my reproach, and publish me in folio to

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the world. Volumes of morality are dull and spiritless compared to me.

“Lord Clive is himself a treatise upon vanity, printed in a golden type. The most unlettered clown writes explanatory notes thereon, and reads them to his children. Yet I could bear these insults could I but bear myself.—A strange unwelcome something hangs about me. In company I seem no company at all.—The festive board appears to me a stage, the crimson-colored port resembles blood—each glass is strangely metamorphosed to a man in armor, and every bowl appears a nabob.

“The joyous toast is like the sound of murder, and the loud laughs are groans of dying men. The scenes of India are all rehearsed, and no one sees the tragedy but myself.—Ah! I discover things which are not, and hear unuttered sounds—

“O peace, thou sweet companion of the calm and innocent! whither art thou fled? Here take my gold, and all the world calls mine, and come thou in exchange. Or thou, thou noisy sweep, who mix thy food with soot and relish it, who canst descend from lofty heights and walk the humble earth again, without repining at the change, come teach that *mystery* to me. Or thou,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

thou ragged, wandering beggar, who, when thou canst not beg successfully, will pilfer from the hound, and eat the dirty morsel sweetly; be thou Lord Clive, and I will beg, so I may laugh like thee.

“Could I unlearn what I’ve already learned—unact what I’ve already acted—or would some sacred power convey me back to youth and innocence, I’d act another part—I’d keep within the vale of humble life, nor wish for what the world calls pomp.

“But since this cannot be,  
And only a few days and sad remain for me,  
I’ll haste to quit the scene; for what is life  
When every passion of the soul’s at strife?”\*

ATLANTICUS.

\* Some time before his death he became very melancholy—subject to strange imaginations—and was found dead at last.

## CUPID AND HYMEN\*

*An Original*

**A**S the little, amorous deity was one day winging his way over a village in Arcadia, he was drawn by the sweet sound of the pipe and tabor, to descend and see what was the matter. The gods themselves are sometimes ravished with the simplicity of mortals. The groves of Arcadia were once the country seats of the celestials, where they relaxed from the business of the skies, and partook of the diversions of the villagers. Cupid being descended, was charmed with the lovely appearance of the place.

Everything he saw had an air of pleasantness. Every shepherd was in his holiday dress, and every shepherdess was decorated with a profusion of flowers. The sound of labor was not heard among them. The little cottages had a peaceful look, and were almost hidden with arbors of jessamine and myrtle. The way to the temple was strewed with flowers, and inclosed with a number of garlands and green arches. Surely, quoth Cupid, here is a festival to-day. I'll hasten and inquire the matter.

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, April, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

So saying, he concealed his bow and quiver, and took a turn thro' the village: As he approached a building distinguished from all the rest by the elegance of its appearance, he heard a sweet confusion of voices mingled with instrumental music. What is the matter, said Cupid to a swain who was sitting under a sycamore tree by the way-side, and humming a very melancholy tune, why are you not at the feast, and why are you so sad? I sit here, answered the swain, to see a sight, and a sad sight 'twill be. What is it, said Cupid, come tell me, for perhaps I can help you. I was once happier than a king, replied the swain, and was envied by all the shepherds of the place, but now everything is dark and gloomy, because—

Because what? said Cupid. Because I am robbed of my Ruralinda; Gothic, the Lord of the manor, hath stolen her from me, and this is to be the nuptial day. A wedding, quoth Cupid, and I know nothing of it? You must be mistaken, shepherd, I keep a record of marriages, and no such thing has come to my knowledge. 'Tis no wedding, I assure you, if I am not consulted about it. The Lord of the manor, continued the shepherd, consulted nobody but Ruralinda's mother, and she longed to see her fair daughter the Lady of the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

manor: He hath spent a deal of money to make all this appearance, for money will do anything; I only wait here to see her come by, and then farewell to the hills and dales.

Cupid bade him not be rash and left him. This is another of Hymen's tricks, quoth Cupid to himself; he hath frequently served me thus, but I'll hasten to him, and have it out with him. So saying, he repaired to the mansion. Everything there had an air of grandeur rather than of joy, sumptuous but not serene.

The company were preparing to walk in procession to the temple. The Lord of the manor looked like the father of the village, and the business he was upon gave a foolish awkwardness to his age and dignity. Ruralinda smiled, because she *would* smile, but in that smile was sorrow. Hymen, with a torch faintly burning on one side only, stood ready to accompany them. The gods when they please can converse in silence, and in that language Cupid began on Hymen.

Know, Hymen, said he, that I am your master. Indulgent Jove gave you to me as a clerk, not as a rival, much less a superior. 'Tis my province to form the union, and yours to witness it.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

But of late you have treacherously assumed to set up for yourself. 'Tis true you may chain couples together like criminals, but you cannot yoke them like lovers; besides, you are such a dull fellow when I am not with you, that you poison the felicities of life. You have not a grace but what is borrowed from me. As well may the moon attempt to enlighten the earth without the sun, as you to bestow happiness when I am absent. At best you are but a temporal and temporary god, whom Jove has appointed not to bestow, but to secure happiness, and restrain the infidelity of mankind. But assure yourself that I'll complain of you to the Synod.

This is very high indeed, replied Hymen, to be called to an account by such a boy of a god as you are. You are not of such importance in the world as your vanity thinks; for my own part, I have enlisted myself with another master, and can very well do without you. Plutus\* and I are greater than Cupid; you may complain and welcome, for Jove himself descended in a silver shower and conquered: and by the same power the Lord of the manor hath won a damsel, in spite of all the arrows in your quiver.

\* God of riches.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cupid, incensed at this reply, resolved to support his authority, and expose the folly of Hymen's pretensions to independence. As the quarrel was carried on in silence, the company were not interrupted by it. The procession began to set forward to the temple, where the ceremony was to be performed. The Lord of the manor led the beautiful Ruralinda, like a lamb devoted to sacrifice. Cupid immediately despatched a petition for assistance to his mother, on one of the sun-beams, and the same messenger, returning in an instant, informed him that whatever he wished should be done.

He immediately cast the old Lord and Ruralinda into one of the most extraordinary sleeps ever known. They continued walking in the procession, talking to each other, and observing every ceremony with as much order as if they had been awake; their souls had in a manner crept from their bodies, as snakes creep from their skin, and leave the perfect appearance of themselves behind.

And so rapidly does imagination change the landscape of life, that in the same space of time which passed over while they were walking to the temple, they both ran through, in a strange variety of dreams, seven years of wretched matri-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

mony. In which imaginary time Gothic experienced all the mortification which age wedded to youth must expect; and she all the infelicity which such a sale and sacrifice of her person justly deserved.

In this state of reciprocal discontent they arrived at the temple: Cupid still continued them in their slumber, and in order to expose the consequences of such marriages, he wrought so magically on the imaginations of them both, that he drove Gothic distracted at the supposed infidelity of his wife, and she, mad with joy at the supposed death of her husband; and just as the ceremony was about to be performed, each of them broke out into such passionate soliloquies as threw the whole company into confusion. He exclaiming, she rejoicing; he imploring death to relieve him, and she preparing to bury him.

Gold, quoth Ruralinda, may be bought too dear, but the grave has befriended me. The company, believing them mad, conveyed them away, Gothic to his mansion, and Ruralinda to her cottage. The next day they awoke, and being grown wise without loss of time, or the pain of real experience, they mutually declined proceeding any farther.—The old Lord continued as he was, and generously bestowed a handsome dowry on Rura-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

linda, who was soon after wedded to the young shepherd, that had piteously bewailed the loss of her. The authority of Cupid was reëstablished, and Hymen ordered never more to appear in the village, unless Cupid introduced him.

ESOP.

## DUELLING\*

*Cursory Reflections on the Single Combat or  
Modern Duel. Addressed to Gentlemen in  
Every Class of Life*

**G**OTHIC and absurd as the custom of duelling is generally allowed to be, there are advocates for it on principle; reasoners, who coolly argue for the necessity and even convenience, of this mode of accommodating certain kinds of personal differences, and of redressing certain species of injuries, for which the laws have not provided proper or adequate remedies: they conclude, therefore, that an appeal to the sword is a requisite supplement to the law, and that this sort of satisfaction for extra judicial offenses, must take place, till some other mode shall be devised and established.

The learned Dr. Robertson has observed, in favor of this practise—even while he condemns it—that its influence on modern manners, has been found, in some respects, beneficial to mankind.

“To this absurd custom,” says he, “we must ascribe, in some degree, the extraordinary gentleness and complaisance of modern manners, and that respectful at-

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, May, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tention of one man to another, which, at present, render the social intercourses of life far more agreeable and decent than amongst the most civilized nations of antiquity.”

The author of these considerations (“Cursory Reflections”) reduces the arguments which have been offered in behalf of the private combat to these two:

I. That the duel is the only expedient to obtain satisfaction for those injuries of which the laws take no cognizance.

II. That a man of honor is bound on pain of infamy to resent every indignity that may be offered to him, with the point of his sword or with a pistol.

These positions our sensible author undertakes to refute; and we shall give a specimen of his reasoning: but, first, it will not be improper to lay before our readers part of what he has said on the origin of the single combat, or duel.

“The ancient states,” says he, “of Greece and Rome, from whence we derive the noblest models of heroism, supported private honor without delivering down to us any evidences of this baneful custom of demanding so severe a decision of private affronts; which, considering the military spirit of these nations, must, if it obtained at all, have proved more destructive to them at home, than the united swords of their enemies abroad.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

“The practise is in fact of later and more ignoble birth; the judicial combat, the parent of modern duels, springing from monkish superstition, grafted on feudal barbarism. Whoever reads Hurd’s entertaining and ingenious, ‘Letters on Chivalry and Romance,’ with Robertson’s elaborate ‘History of the Emperor Charles V.,’ will no longer hesitate concerning the clear fact.

“The judicial combat obtained in ignorant ages, on a conclusion that in this appeal to Providence, innocence and right would be pointed out by victory, and guilt stigmatised and punished by defeat. But alas! experience at length taught us not to expect a miraculous interposition, whenever superior strength, superior skill, and superior bravery or ferocity, either or all of them, happened to appear on the side of injustice.”

Dr. Robertson, above quoted, denies the *fashion* (as the writer of these reflections has observed) of terminating private differences by the sword, or pistol, by the illustrious example of the challenge sent by Francis I of France to the Emperor Charles V. This was not, indeed, the first instance of such challenges, among princes; but, as our author remarks, the dignity of the parties, in the present case, afforded a sufficient sanction for extending this mode of deciding differences; to which we may add, that the spirit of chivalry and romantic knighthood, still prevailing in those fighting times, was continually exciting the heroes of the age to

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

this mode of proving their personal prowess and valor.

We now return to our author's manner of reasoning upon the postulata before stated:

"With respect to the first argument," says he, "if we annex any determined ideas to our words, by satisfaction we are to understand redress, compensation, amends or atonement. Now, Gentlemen! for the sake of all that is valuable in life, condescend for a minute to bring down your refined notions to the sure standard of common sense, and then weigh the satisfaction to be obtained in a duel.

"Is satisfaction to be enforced from an adversary by putting a weapon into his hand, and standing a contention with him, life for life, upon an equal chance?

"Is an offender against the rules of gentility, or against the obligations of morality, a man presumptively destitute of honor himself, fairly entitled to this equal chance of extending an injury already committed, to the irreparable degree of taking the life also from an innocent man?

"If a gentleman is infatuated enough to meet a person who has degraded himself from the character of a gentleman, upon these equal terms, and loses a limb, or his life, what species of satisfaction can that be called?—But it is better to suffer death than indignity. What, from the injurious hand? Correct your ideas, and you will esteem life too valuable to be complimented away for a mistaken notion.

"If the aggressor falls, the full purpose of the injured person is thus answered, but what is the satisfaction? The survivor becomes a refugee, like a felon;

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

or if he should be cleared by the equivocal tenderness of a court of justice, must he not be a barbarian instead of a gentleman, who can feed upon this inhuman bloody satisfaction, without experiencing the pangs of self-reproach, for having sacrificed the life of a fellow creature to a mere punctilio; and perhaps involved the ruin of an innocent family by the brutal deed?

“If, on the other hand, he is really a mistaken man of humanity, what has he obtained? The satisfaction of embittering all the remainder of his life with the keenest sorrow; of having forfeited all his future peace of mind by a consciousness of guilt, from which his notions of honor can never release him, till the load drags him down to the grave!

“If a man of strict honor is reduced to beg his life of a mere pretender to honor, a scoundrel; what satisfaction can this be esteemed? Is not this a mortifying, a painful aggravation of a wrong already sustained? What consolation can honor afford for such a disgrace?”

Our author has some other very sensible animadversions on this first branch of the argument in defense of duelling; after which, he proceeds to the second plea, viz. “The obligation of resenting affronts in this manner, founded on the infamy of suspected courage”; and, in our opinion, he satisfactorily proves that this argument is by no means irrefragable: but for his reasoning on this delicate point, we must refer to his pamphlet, and proceed to take notice of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

his plan for putting a stop to the practise of duelling.

In the first place, he recommends that a law be passed, “declaring the act of sending a challenge, or the reducing a person to defend his life with sword or pistol, to be felony; and the killing a person in a duel, to be punished as murder, without benefit of clergy, unless sufficient proof is made that the party killed, really urged the combat.”

As this first part of his proposal relates rather to the mode of punishing, than the means of preventing duels, he proceeds:

“In every quarrel between two gentlemen where satisfaction is thought necessary, let the parties be empowered to summon a jury of honor from among their friends, six to be appointed by one gentleman, and six by the other, or in case of a refusal of either party, let the six chosen by the other complete the number by their own appointment, each nominating one; and finally, let all this be done, if possible, free from the embarrassing intervention of lawyers.

“Let this jury of honor, when duly assembled, discuss the merits of the dispute in question, and form their opinion by a majority of votes; but to guard against generating fresh quarrels by the discovery of the votes on either side, let the whole twelve be bound to secrecy upon their honor, and the whole twelve sign the verdict of the majority.

“Let a copy of this verdict be delivered to the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

gentleman whose conduct is condemned; and if he refuses to make the required concession or due satisfaction, let this opinion be published in such a manner as may be thought proper, and be understood to divest him of his character as a gentleman so long as he remains contumacious.

“By this single expedient, conveyed in few words, it is hoped the necessity of duels may be effectually superseded, the practise suppressed, and ample satisfaction enforced for all injuries of honor. In the examination of subjects of importance we are often tempted to overlook the thing we want, on a supposition that it cannot be near at hand. This plan may perhaps admit of amendment, but it is feared the more complicated it is rendered, the more difficult it may prove to carry into execution; and it is hoped, as it is, it will not be the worse thought of, for coming from an unknown pen.”

With respect to the practicability of this scheme, we apprehend that the great difficulty would lie in obliging the quarreling parties, or either of them (who by the author’s plan are merely empowered), to refer the matter to a court of honor. But the writer does not give this as a finished plan: he barely suggests the hint; leaving others to improve upon it, if thought worthy of further consideration.

As to the proposed act for punishing the survivor, where one of the parties has fallen in the conflict, it is indeed, a melancholy truth, that

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

our laws in being have been found inadequate to the purpose of preventing duels by the dread of legal consequences. The King of Sweden's method was virtually the same which is here recommended; and it is said to have been effectual in that kingdom.

The great Gustavus Adolphus, finding that the custom of duelling was becoming alarmingly prevalent among the officers in his army, was determined to suppress, if possible, those false notions of honor. Soon after the King had formed this resolution, and issued some very rigorous edicts against the practise, a quarrel arose between two of his generals; who agreed to crave His Majesty's pardon to decide the quarrel by the laws of honor.

The King consented, and said he would be a spectator of the combat; he went, accordingly, to the place appointed, attended by a body of guards, and the public executioner. He then told the combatants that "they must fight till one of them died"; and turning to the executioner, he added, "Do you immediately strike off the head of the survivor." The monarch's inflexibility had the desired effect: the differences between the two officers were adjusted; and no more challenges were heard of in the army of Gustavus Adolphus.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

From the peculiar prevalence of this custom in countries where the religious system is established, which, of all others, most expressly prohibits the gratification of revenge, with every species of outrage and violence, we too plainly see, how little mankind are, in reality, influenced by the principles of the religion by which they profess to be guided, and in defense of which they will occasionally risk even their lives.

## REFLECTIONS ON TITLES \*

Ask me what's honor? I'll the truth impart:  
Know, honor then, is *Honesty of Heart*.

WHITEHEAD.

WHEN I reflect on the pompous titles bestowed on unworthy men, I feel an indignity that instructs me to despise the absurdity. The *Honorable* plunderer of his country, or the *Right Honorable* murderer of mankind, create such a contrast of ideas as exhibit a monster rather than a man. Virtue is inflamed at the violation, and sober reason calls it nonsense.

Dignities and high sounding names have different effects on different beholders. The lustre of the *Star* and the title of *My Lord*, over-awe the superstitious vulgar, and forbid them to inquire into the character of the possessor: Nay more, they are, as it were, bewitched to admire in the great, the vices they would honestly condemn in themselves. This sacrifice of common sense is the certain badge which distinguishes slavery from freedom; for when men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon.

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, May, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

But the reasonable freeman sees through the magic of a title, and examines the man before he approves him. To him the honors of the worthless serve to write their master's vices in capitals, and their stars shine to no other end than to read them by. The possessors of undue honors are themselves sensible of this; for when their repeated guilt renders their persons unsafe, they disown their rank, and like glow-worms, extinguish themselves into common reptiles to avoid discovery. Thus Jeffries sunk into a fisherman, and his master escaped in the habit of a peasant.

Modesty forbids men, separately or collectively, to assume titles. But as all honors, even that of kings, originated from the public, the public may justly be called the fountain of true honor. And it is with much pleasure I have heard the title of *Honorable* applied to a body of men, who nobly disregarding private ease and interest for public welfare, have justly merited the address of The Honorable Continental Congress.

Vox POPULI.

## THE DREAM INTERPRETED\*

PARCHED with thirst and wearied with a fatiguing journey to Virginia, I turned out of the road to shelter myself among the shades; in a little time I had the good fortune to light on a spring, and the refreshing draught went sweetly down. How little of luxury does nature want! This cooling stream administered more relief than all the wines of Oporto; I drank and was satisfied; my fatigue abated, my wasted spirits were reinforced, and 'tis no wonder after such a delicious repast that I sunk insensibly into slumber.

The wildest fancies in that state of forgetfulness always appear regular and connected; nothing is wrong in a dream, be it ever so unnatural.

I am apt to think that the wisest men dream the most inconsistently; for as the judgment has nothing or very little to do in regulating the circumstances of a dream, it necessarily follows that the more powerful and creative the imagination is, the wilder it runs in that state of unrestrained invention. While those who are unable to wander out of the track of common thinking when

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, June, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

awake, never exceed the boundaries of common nature when asleep.

But to return from my digression, which in this place is nothing more than that wandering of fancy which every dreamer is entitled to, and which cannot in either case be applied to myself, as in the dream I am about to relate I was only a spectator, and had no other business to do than to remember.

To what scene or country my ideas had conveyed themselves, or whether they had created a region on purpose to explore, I know not, but I saw before me one of the most pleasing landscapes I have ever beheld. I gazed at it, till my mind, partaking of the prospect, became incorporated therewith, and felt all the tranquillity of the place.

In this state of ideal happiness I sat down on the side of a mountain, totally forgetful of the world I had left behind me. The most delicious fruits presented themselves to my hands, and one of the clearest rivers that ever watered the earth rolled along at the foot of the mountain, and invited me to drink. The distant hills were blue with the tincture of the skies, and seemed as if they were the threshold of the celestial region.

But while I gazed the whole scene began to

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

change, by an almost insensible gradation. The sun, instead of administering life and health, consumed everything with an intolerable heat. The verdure withered. The hills appeared burned and black. The fountains dried away; and the atmosphere became a motionless lake of air, loaded with pestilence and death. After several days of wretched suffocation, the sky grew darkened with clouds from every quarter, till one extended storm excluded the face of heaven.

A dismal silence took place, as if the earth, struck with a general panic, was listening like a criminal to the sentence of death. The glimmering light with which the sun feebly penetrated the clouds began to fail, till Egyptian darkness added to the horror. The beginning of the tempest was announced by a confusion of distant thunders, till at length a general discharge of the whole artillery of heaven was poured down upon the earth.

Trembling, I shrunk into the side of a cave, and dreaded the event. The mountain shook, and threatened me with instant destruction. The rapid lightning at every blaze exhibited the landscape of a world on fire, while the accumulating torrent, not in rain, but floods of water, resembled another deluge.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

At length the fury of the storm abated, and nature, fatigued with fear and watching, sank into rest. But when the morning rose, and the universal lamp of heaven emerged from the deep, how I was struck with astonishment! I expected to have seen a world in ruins, which nothing but a new creation could have restored. Instead of which, the prospect was lovely and inviting, and had all the promising appearance of exceeding its former glory.

The air, purged of its poisonous vapors, was fresh and healthy. The dried fountains were replenished, the waters sweet and wholesome. The sickly earth, recovered to new life, abounded with vegetation. The groves were musical with innumerable songsters, and the long-deserted fields echoed with the joyous sound of the husbandman. All, all was felicity; and what I had dreaded as an evil, became a blessing. At this happy reflection I awoke; and having refreshed myself with another draught from the friendly spring, pursued my journey.

After traveling a few miles I fell in with a companion, and as we rode through a wood but little frequented by travelers, I began, for the sake of chatting away the tediousness of the journey, to relate my dream. "I think," replied my

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

friend, "that I can interpret it: That beautiful country which you saw is America. The sickly state you beheld her in, has been coming on her for these ten years past. Her commerce has been drying up by her repeated restrictions, till by one merciless edict the ruin of it is completed.

"The pestilential atmosphere represents that ministerial corruption which surrounds and exercises its dominion over her, and which nothing but a storm can purify. The tempest is the present contest, and the event will be the same. She will rise with new glories from the conflict, and her fame be established in every corner of the globe; while it will be remembered to her eternal honor, that she has not sought the quarrel, but has been driven into it. He who guides the natural tempest will regulate the political one, and bring good out of evil.

"In our petition to Britain we asked but for peace; but the prayer was rejected. The cause is now before a higher court, the court of Providence, before whom the arrogance of kings, the infidelity of ministers, the general corruption of government, and all the cobweb artifice of courts, will fall confounded and ashamed."

## REFLECTIONS ON UNHAPPY MARRIAGES\*

**T**HOUGH it is confessed on all hands that the weal or woe of life depends on no one circumstance so critical as matrimony, yet how few seem to be influenced by this universal acknowledgment, or act with a caution becoming the danger.

Those that are undone this way, are the young, the rash and amorous, whose hearts are ever glowing with desire, whose eyes are ever roaming after beauty; these dote on the first amiable image that chance throws in their way, and when the flame is once kindled, would risk eternity itself to appease it. But, still like their first parents, they no sooner taste the tempting fruit, but their eyes are opened: the folly of their intemperance becomes visible; shame succeeds first, and then repentance; but sorrow for themselves soon returns to anger with the innocent cause of their unhappiness.

Hence flow bitter reproaches, and keen invectives, which end in mutual hatred and contempt. Love abhors clamor and soon flies away, and

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, June, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

happiness finds no entrance when love is gone: Thus, for a few hours of dalliance, I will not call it affection, the repose of all their future days is sacrificed; and those who but just before seem'd to live only for each other, now would almost cease to live, that the separation might be eternal.

But hold, says the man of phlegm and economy, all are not of this hasty turn.—I allow it—there are persons in the world who are young without passions, and in health without appetite: these hunt out a wife as they go to *Smithfield* for a horse; and intermarry fortunes, not minds, or even bodies: In this case the bridegroom has no joy but in taking possession of the portion, and the bride dreams of little beside new clothes, visits and congratulations. Thus, as their expectations of pleasure are not very great, neither is the disappointment very grievous; they just keep each other in countenance, live decently, and are exactly as fond the twentieth year of matrimony, as the first.

But I would not advise anyone to call this state of insipidity happiness, because it would argue him both ignorant of its nature, and incapable of enjoying it. Mere absence of pain will

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

undoubtedly constitute ease; and without ease, there can be no happiness.

Ease, however, is but the medium, through which happiness is tasted, and but passively receives what the last actually bestows; if therefore the rash who marry inconsiderately, perish in the storms raised by their own passions, these slumber away their days in a sluggish calm, and rather dream they live, than experience it by a series of actual sensible enjoyments.

As matrimonial happiness is neither the result of insipidity, or ill-grounded passion, surely those, who make their court to age, ugliness, and all that's detestable both in mind and body, cannot hope to find it, tho' qualified with all the riches that avarice covets, or Plutus could bestow.

Matches of this kind are downright prostitution, however softened by the letter of the law; and he or she who receives the golden equivalent of youth and beauty, so wretchedly bestowed, can never enjoy what they so dearly purchased. The shocking incumbrance would render the sumptuous banquet tasteless, and the magnificent bed loathsome; rest would disdain the one, and appetite sicken at the other; uneasiness wait upon both; even gratitude itself

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

would almost cease to be obliging, and good manners grow such a burden, that the best bred or best-natured people breathing, would be often tempted to throw it down.

But say we should not wonder that those who either marry gold without love, or love without gold, should be miserable. I can't forbear being astonished, if such whose fortunes are affluent, whose desires were mutual, who equally languished for the happy moment before it came, and seemed for a while to be equally transported when it had taken place. If even these should, in the end, prove as unhappy as either of the others! And yet how often is this the melancholy circumstance!

As ecstasy abates, coolness succeeds, which often makes way for indifference, and that for neglect: Sure of each other by the nuptial band, they no longer take any pains to be mutually agreeable; careless if they displease; and yet angry if reproached; with so little relish for each other's company, that anybody's else is welcome, and more entertaining. Their union thus broke, they pursue separate pleasures; never meet but to wrangle, or part but to find comfort in other society. After this the descent is easy to utter aversion, which having wearied itself out with

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

heart-burnings, clamors, and affronts, subsides into a perfect insensibility; when fresh objects of love step in to their relief, on either side, and mutual infidelity makes way for mutual complaisance, that each may be the better able to deceive the other.

I shall conclude with the sentiments of an American savage on this subject, who being advised by one of our countrymen to marry according to the ceremonies of the Church, as being the ordinance of an infinitely wise and good God, briskly replied, "That either the Christians' God was not so good and wise as He was represented, or He never meddled with the marriages of His people; since not one in a hundred of them had anything to do either with happiness or common sense. Hence," continued he, "as soon as ever you meet, you long to part; and, not having this relief in your power, by way of revenge, double each other's misery. Whereas in ours, which have no other ceremony than mutual affection, and last no longer than they bestow mutual pleasures, we make it our business to oblige the heart we are afraid to lose; and being at liberty to separate, seldom or never feel the inclination. But if any should be found so wretched among us, as to hate where the only commerce ought to

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

be love, we instantly dissolve the band. God made us all in pairs; each has his mate somewhere or other; and 'tis our duty to find each other out, since no creature was ever intended to be miserable."

## THOUGHTS ON DEFENSIVE WAR\*

COULD the peaceable principle of the Quakers be universally established, arms and the art of war would be wholly extirpated: But we live not in a world of angels. The reign of Satan is not ended; neither are we to expect to be defended by miracles. The pillar of the cloud existed only in the wilderness, in the nonge of the Israelites. It protected them in their retreat from Pharaoh, while they were *destitute* of the natural means of defense, for they brought no arms from Egypt; but it neither fought their battles nor shielded them from dangers afterwards.

I am thus far a Quaker, that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms, and settle matters by negotiation; but unless the whole will, the matter ends, and I take up my musket and thank heaven he has put it in my power.

Whoever considers the unprincipled enemy we have to cope with, will not hesitate to declare that nothing but arms or miracles can reduce

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, July, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

them to reason and moderation. They have lost sight of the limits of humanity. The portrait of a parent red with the blood of her children is a picture fit only for the galleries of the infernals. From the House of Commons the troops of Britain have been exhorted to fight, not for the defense of their natural rights, not to repel the invasion or the insult of enemies; but on the vilest of all pretenses, gold. “Ye fight for solid revenue” was vociferated in the House.

Thus America *must suffer* because she has something to lose. Her crime is property. That which allures the highwayman has allured the Ministry under a gentler name. But the position laid down by Lord Sandwich, is a clear demonstration of the justice of defensive arms. “The Americans,” quoth this Quixote of modern days, “*will not fight*; therefore we will.” His Lordship’s plan when analyzed amounts to this.

These people are either too superstitiously religious, or too cowardly for arms; they either *cannot* or *dare not* defend; their property is open to anyone who has the courage to attack them. Send but your troops and the prize is ours. Kill a few and take the whole. Thus the peaceable part of mankind will be continually overrun by the vile and abandoned, while they neglect the means of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

self defense. The supposed quietude of a good man allures the ruffian; while on the other hand, arms, like law, discourage and keep the invader and the plunderer in awe, and preserve order in the world as well as property.

The balance of power is the scale of peace. The same balance would be preserved were all the world destitute of arms, for all would be alike; but since some *will not*, others *dare not* lay them aside. And while a single nation refuses to lay them down, it is proper that all should keep them up. Horrid mischief would ensue were one-half the world deprived of the use of them; for while avarice and ambition have a place in the heart of man, the weak will become a prey to the strong. The history of every age and nation establishes these truths, and facts need but little arguments when they prove themselves.

But there is a point to view this matter in of superior consequence to the defense of property; and that point is *Liberty* in all its meanings. In the barbarous ages of the world, men in general had no liberty. The strong governed the weak at will; till the coming of Christ there was no such thing as political freedom in any known part of the earth. The Jewish kings were in point of government as absolute as the Pharaohs.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Men were frequently put to death without trial, at the will of the sovereign.

The Romans held the world in slavery, and were themselves the slaves of their emperors. The madman of Macedon governed by caprice and passion, and strided as arrogantly over the world as if he had made and peopled it; and it is needless to imagine that other nations at that time were more refined. Wherefore political as well as spiritual freedom is the gift of God through Christ, the second in the catalogue of blessings; and so intimately related, so sympathetically united with the first, that the one cannot be wounded without communicating an injury to the other. Political liberty is the visible pass which guards the religions. It is the out-work by which the Church militant is defended, and the attacks of the enemy are frequently made through this fortress. The same power which has established a restraining Port Bill in the colonies, has established a restraining Protestant Church Bill in Canada. I had the pleasure and advantage of hearing this matter wisely investigated, by a gentleman, in a sermon to one of the battalions of this city; and am fully convinced, that spiritual freedom is the root of political liberty.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

First. Because, till spiritual freedom was made manifest, political liberty did not exist.

Secondly. Because, in proportion that *spiritual freedom* has been manifested, *political liberty* has increased.

Thirdly. Whenever the visible church has been oppressed, political freedom has suffered with it. Read the history of Mary and the Stuarts. The popish world at this day, by not knowing the full manifestation of spiritual freedom, enjoy but a shadow of political liberty.— Though I am unwilling to accuse the present Government of popish principles, they cannot, I think, be clearly acquitted of popish practises; the facility with which they perceive the dark and ignorant are governed, in popish nations, will always be a temptation to the lovers of arbitrary power to adopt the same methods.

As the union between spiritual freedom and political liberty seems nearly inseparable, it is our duty to defend both. And defense in the first instance is best. The lives of hundreds of both countries had been preserved had America been in arms a year ago. Our enemies have mistaken our peace for cowardice, and supposing us unarmed have begun the attack.

A LOVER OF PEACE.

## AN OCCASIONAL LETTER ON THE FEMALE SEX\*

O Woman! lovely Woman!  
Nature made thee to temper man,  
We had been Brutes without you.  
—OTWAY.

**I**F we take a survey of ages and of countries, we shall find the women, almost—without exception—at all times and in all places, adored and oppressed. Man, who has never neglected an opportunity of exerting his power, in paying homage to their beauty, has always availed himself of their weakness. He has been at once their tyrant and their slave.

Nature herself, in forming beings so susceptible and tender, appears to have been more attentive to their charms than to their happiness. Continually surrounded with griefs and fears, the women more than share all our miseries, and are besides subjected to ills which are peculiarly their own. They cannot be the means of life without exposing themselves to the loss of it; every revolution which they undergo, alters their health, and threatens their existence.

Cruel distempers attack their beauty—and

\* From the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, August, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the hour, which confirms their release from those, is perhaps the most melancholy of their lives. It robs them of the most essential characteristic of their sex. They can then only hope for protection from the humiliating claims of pity, or the feeble voice of gratitude.

Society, instead of alleviating their condition, is to them the source of new miseries. More than one-half of the globe is covered with savages; and among all these people women are completely wretched. Man, in a state of barbarity, equally cruel and indolent, active by necessity, but naturally inclined to repose, is acquainted with little more than the physical effects of love: and, having none of those moral ideas which only can soften the empire of force, he is led to consider it as his supreme law, subjecting to his despotism those whom reason had made his equal, but whose imbecility betrayed them to his strength.

“Nothing,” says Professor Miller, speaking of the women of barbarous nations, “can exceed the dependence and subjection in which they are kept, or the toil and drudgery which they are obliged to undergo. The husband, when he is not engaged in some war-like exercise, indulges himself in idleness, and devolves upon his

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

wife the whole burden of his domestic affairs. He despairs to assist her in any of those servile employments. She sleeps in a different bed, and is seldom permitted to have any conversation or correspondence with him."

The women among the Indians of America are what the Helots were among the Spartans, a vanquished people, obliged to toil for their conquerors. Hence on the banks of the Oronoko, we have seen mothers slaying their daughters out of compassion, and smothering them in the hour of their birth. They consider this barbarous pity as a virtue.

"The men," says Commodore Byron, in his account of the inhabitants of South America, "exercise a most despotic authority over their wives, whom they consider in the same view they do any other part of their property, and dispose of them accordingly. Even their common treatment of them is cruel; for though the toil and hazard of procuring food lies entirely on the women, yet they are not suffered to touch any part of it till the husband is satisfied; and then he assigns them their portion, which is generally very scanty, and such as he has not a stomach for himself."

Among the nations of the East we find another kind of despotism and dominion prevail—the seraglio, and the domestic servitude of woman, authorized by the manners and established

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

by the laws. In Turkey, in Persia, in India, in Japan, and over the vast Empire of China, one-half of the human species is oppressed by the other.

The excess of oppression in those countries springs from the excess of love.

All Asia is covered with prisons, where beauty in bondage waits the caprices of a master. The multitude of women there assembled have no will, no inclinations but his: Their triumphs are only for a moment; and their rivalry, their hate, and their animosities, continue till death. There the lovely sex are obliged to repay even their servitude with the most tender affections; or, what is still more mortifying, with the counterfeit of an affection, which they do not feel.

There the most gloomy tyranny has subjected them to creatures, who, being of neither sex, are a dishonor to both. There, in short, their education tends only to debase them; their virtues are forced; their very pleasures are involuntary and joyless; and after an existence of a few years —till the bloom of youth is over—their period of neglect commences, which is long and dreadful. In the temperate latitude where the climates, giving less ardor to passion, leave more confidence in virtue, the women have not been

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

deprived of their liberty, but a severe legislation has, at all times, kept them in a state of dependence.

One while, they were confined to their own apartments, and debarred at once from business and amusement; at other times, a tedious guardianship defrauded their hearts, and insulted their understandings. Affronted in one country by polygamy, which gives them their rivals for their inseparable companions; enslaved in another by indissoluble ties, which often join the gentle to the rude, and sensibility to brutality.

Even in countries where they may be esteemed most happy, constrained in their desires in the disposal of their goods, robbed of freedom of will by the laws, the slaves of opinion, which rules them with absolute sway, and construes the slightest appearances into guilt; surrounded on all sides by judges, who are at once tyrants and their seducers, and who, after having prepared their faults, punish every lapse with dishonor—nay, usurp the right of degrading them on suspicion!

Who does not feel for the tender sex? Yet such, I am sorry to say, is the lot of woman over the whole earth. Man, with regard to them, in

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

all climates, and in all ages, has been either an insensible husband or an oppressor; but they have sometimes experienced the cold and deliberate oppression of pride, and sometimes the violent and terrible tyranny of jealousy. When they are not beloved they are nothing; and, when they are, they are tormented. They have almost equal cause to be afraid of indifference and of love. Over three-quarters of the globe, nature has placed them between contempt and misery.

“The melting desires, or the fiery passions,” says Professor Ferguson, “which in one climate take place between the sexes, are, in another, changed into a sober consideration, or a patience of mutual disgust. This change is remarked in crossing the Mediterranean, in following the course of the Mississippi, in ascending the mountains of Caucasus, and in passing from the Alps and the Pyrenees to the shores of the Baltic.

“The burning ardors and torturing jealousies of the seraglio and harem, which have reigned so long in Asia and Africa, and which, in the southern parts of Europe, have scarcely given way to the differences of religion and civil establishments, are found, however, with an abatement of heat in the climate, to be more easily changed, in one latitude, into a temporary passion, which engrosses the mind without enfeebling it, and which excites to romantic achievements. By a farther progress to the North it is changed into a spirit of gallantry, which employs the wit and fancy more than the heart, which prefers intrigue to enjoyment,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

and substitutes affection and vanity where sentiment and desire have failed. As it departs from the sun, the same passion is farther composed into a habit of domestic connection, or frozen into a state of insensibility, under which the sexes at freedom scarcely choose to unite their society."

Even among people where beauty received the highest homage, we find men who would deprive the sex of every kind of reputation; "The most virtuous woman," says a celebrated Greek, "is she who is least talked of." That morose man, while he imposes duties upon women, would deprive them of the sweets of public esteem, and in exacting virtues from them, would make it a crime to aspire at honor.

If a woman were to defend the cause of her sex, she might address him in the following manner:

"How great is your injustice! If we have an equal right with you to virtue, why should we not have an equal right to praise? The public esteem ought to wait upon merit. Our duties are different from yours, but they are not therefore less difficult to fulfil, or of less consequence to society. They are the fountains of your felicity, and the sweetness of life. We are wives and mothers. 'T is we who form the union and the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

cordiality of families: "T is we who soften that savage rudeness which considers everything as due to force, and which would involve man with man in eternal war.

We cultivate in you that humanity which makes you feel for the misfortunes of others, and our tears forewarn you of your own danger. Nay, you cannot be ignorant that we have need of courage not less than you: More feeble in ourselves, we have perhaps more trials to encounter. Nature assails us with sorrow, law and custom press us with constraint, and sensibility and virtue alarm us with their continual conflict. Sometimes also the name of citizen demands from us the tribute of fortitude.

When you offer your blood to the state think that it is ours. In giving it our sons and our husbands we give more than ourselves. You can only die on the field of battle, but we have the misfortune to survive those whom we love most. Alas! while your ambitious vanity is unceasingly laboring to cover the earth with statues, with monuments, and with inscriptions to eternize, if possible your names, and give yourselves an existence, when this body is no more, why must we be condemned to live and to die unknown?

Would that the grave and eternal forgetful-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ness should be our lot. Be not our tyrants in all. Permit our names to be sometimes pronounced beyond the narrow circle in which we live. Permit friendship, or at least love, to inscribe its emblems on the tomb where our ashes repose; and deny us not that public esteem which, after the esteem of one's self, is the sweetest reward of well doing."

All men, however, it must be owned, have not been equally unjust to their fair companions. In some countries public honors have been paid to women. Art has erected them monuments. Eloquence has celebrated their virtues, and History has collected whatever could adorn their character.

## A SERIOUS THOUGHT\*

**W**HEN I reflect on the horrid cruelties exercised by Britain in the East Indies—How thousands perished by artificial famine—How religion and every manly principle of honor and honesty were sacrificed to luxury and pride—When I read of the wretched natives being blown away, for no other crime than because, sickened with the miserable scene, they refused to fight—When I reflect on these and a thousand instances of similar barbarity, I firmly believe that the Almighty, in compassion to mankind, will curtail the power of Britain.

And when I reflect on the use she hath made of the discovery of this new world—that the little paltry dignity of earthly kings hath been set up in preference to the great cause of the King of kings—That instead of Christian examples to the Indians, she hath basely tampered with their passions, imposed on their ignorance, and made them tools of treachery and murder—And when to these and many other melancholy reflections I add this sad remark, that ever since the discovery of America she hath employed herself in the most

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, October 18, 1775.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

horrid of all traffics, that of human flesh, unknown to the most savage nations, hath yearly (without provocation and in cold blood) ravaged the hapless shores of Africa, robbing it of its unoffending inhabitants to cultivate her stolen dominions in the West.

When I reflect on these, I hesitate not for a moment to believe that the Almighty will finally separate America from Britain. Call it independence or what you will, if it is the cause of God and humanity it will go on.

And when the Almighty shall have blest us, and made us a people *dependent only upon Him*, then may our first gratitude be shown by an act of continental legislation, which shall put a stop to the importation of negroes for sale, soften the hard fate of those already here, and in time procure their freedom.

HUMANUS.



THE TOMB

What art thou doing here? I have come to my home,  
To lay thy body in the earth.

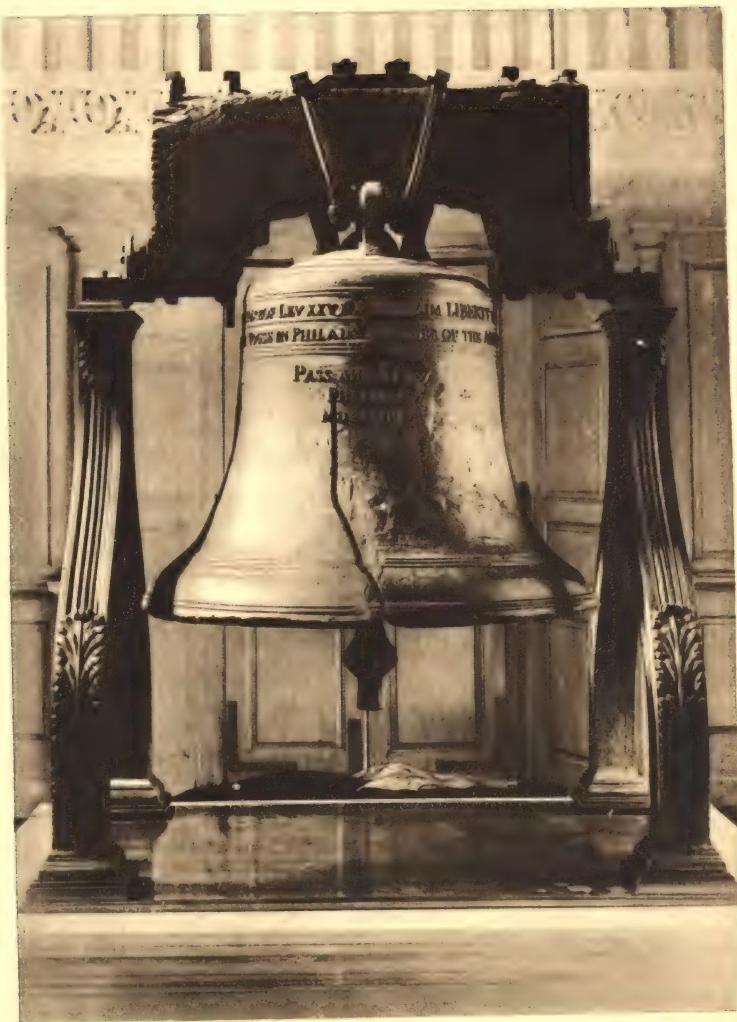
## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

horrid of all traffics, that of human flesh, unknown to the most savage nations, hath yearly (without provocation and in cold blood) ravaged the hapless shores of Africa, robbing it of its unoffending inhabitants to cultivate her stolen dominions in the West.

When I reflect on these, I hesitate not for a moment to believe that the Almighty will finally separate America from Britain. Call it independence or what you will, if it is the cause of **LIBERTY BELL**, God and humanity it will go on.

*Photogravure from a Photograph, taken for this work.  
of the Bell in Independence Hall by Burtins,*  
and made us a people dependent only upon Him, then may our first gratitude be shown by an act of continental legislation, which shall put a stop to the importation of negroes for sale, soften the hard fate of those already here, and in time procure their freedom.

HUMANUS.





## THE FORESTER'S LETTERS\*

### I

To CATO†

**T**O be *nobly wrong* is more manly than to be *meanly right*. Only let the error be disinterested—let it wear *not the mask*, but the *mark* of principle, and 'tis pardonable. It is on this large and liberal ground, that we distinguish between men and their tenets, and generously preserve our friendship for the one, while we combat with every prejudice of the other. But let not Cato take this compliment to himself; he stands excluded from the benefit of the distinction; he deserves it not. And if the sincerity of disdain can add a cubit to the stature of my sentiments, it shall not be wanting.

It is indifferent to me who the writer of Cato's letters is, and sufficient for me to know, that they are gorged with absurdity, confusion, contradiction, and the most notorious and wilful falsehoods. Let Cato and his faction be

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, April 3, 1776.

† "Cato" was the Rev. Dr. William Smith, (a native of Scotland), Provost of the College of Philadelphia. His letters appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. He was a bitter opponent of the Quakers, and was imprisoned, for a time, for his attacks on the Assembly.—Ed.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

against independence and welcome; their consequence will not *now* turn the scale. But let them have regard to justice, and pay some attention to the plain doctrine of reason. Where these are wanting, the sacred cause of truth applauds our anger, and dignifies it with the name of virtue.

Four letters have already appeared under the specious name of Cato. What pretensions the writer of them can have to the signature, the public will best determine; while, on my own part, I prophetically content myself with contemplating the similarity of their exits.

The first of those letters promised a second, the second a third, the third a fourth; the fourth hath since made its appearance, and still the writer keeps wide of the question. Why doth he thus loiter in the suburbs of the dispute? Why hath he not shown us what the numerous blessings of reconciliation [with Great Britain] are, and *proved them practicable?* But he cunningly avoids the point. He cannot but discover the rock he is driving on.

The fate of the Roman Cato is before his eyes: And that the public may be prepared for his funeral, and for his funeral oration, I will venture to predict the time and the manner of his exit. The moment he explains his terms of recon-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ciliation, the typographical Cato dies. If they be calculated to please the [British] Cabinet they will not go down with the Colonies: and if they be suited to the Colonies they will be rejected by the Cabinet. The line of no-variation is yet unfound; and, like the philosopher's stone, doth not exist.

"I am bold," says Cato, "to declare and yet hope to make it evident to every honest man, that the true interest of America lies in *reconciliation* with Great Britain on *constitutional principles*."

This is a curious way of lumping the business indeed! And Cato may as well attempt to catch lions in a mouse-trap as to hope to allure the public with such general and unexplained expressions. It is now a mere bugbear to talk of *reconciliation* on *constitutional principles* unless the terms of the first be produced and the sense of the other be defined; and unless he does this he does nothing.

To follow Cato through every absurdity and falsehood in the compass of a letter\* is impossible; neither is it *now* necessary. *Cassandra* (and I thank him) hath saved me much trouble; there is a spirit in his remarks which honesty only can

\*The writer intended at first to have contained his remarks in one letter.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

inspire, and a uniformity in the conduct of his letters which the want of principle can never arrive at. Mark that, Cato.

One observation which I cannot help making on Cato's letters, is that they are addressed "*To the People of Pennsylvania*" only. In almost any other writer this might have passed unnoticed, but we know it hath mischief in its meaning. The particular circumstance of a convention is undoubtedly provincial, but the great business of the day is continental. And he who dares to endeavor to withdraw this province from the glorious union by which all are supported, deserves the reprobation of all men. It is the true interest of the whole to go hand in hand; and dismal in every instance would be the fate of that colony which should retreat from the protection of the rest.

The first of Cato's letters is insipid in its style, language and substance; crowded with personal and private innuendoes and directly leveled against "*the Majesty of the People of Pennsylvania*."

The Committee could only call, propose or recommend a convention; but, like all other public measures, it still rested with the people at large, whether they would approve it or not; and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cato's reasoning on the right or wrong of that choice is contemptible; because, if the body of the people had thought, or should still think that the Assembly (or any of their delegates in Congress) by setting under the embarrassment of *oaths*, and entangled with *government* and *governors*, are not so perfectly free as they ought to be, they undoubtedly had and still have both the *right* and the *power* to place even the whole authority of the Assembly in any body of men they please; and whoever is hardy enough to say to the contrary is an enemy to mankind.

The Constitution of Pennsylvania hath been twice changed through the cunning of former proprietors; surely, the people, whose right, power, and property is greater than that of any single man, may make such alterations in their mode of government as the change of times and things require. Cato is exceedingly fond of impressing us with the importance of our "*chartered constitution.*"

Alas! We are not now, Sir, to be led away by the jingle of a phrase. Had we framed our conduct by the contents of the present charters, we had ere now been in a state of helpless misery.

That *very Assembly* you mention hath broken it, and been obliged to break it, in almost every

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

instance of their proceedings. Hold it up to the public, and it is transparent with holes; pierced with as many deadly wounds as the body of M'Leod.\* Disturb not its remains, Cato, nor dis-honor it with another funeral oration.

There is nothing in Cato's first letter worthy of notice but the following insinuating falsehood: “Grievous as the least restraint of the press must always be to a *people* entitled to freedom, it must be the more so, when it is not only unwarranted by *those* to whom *they* have committed the care of *their* liberties but cannot be warranted by *them*, consistent with liberty itself.”

The rude and unscholastical confusion of persons in the above paragraph, though it throws an obscurity on the meaning, still leaves it discoverable. Who, Sir, hath laid any restraint on the liberty of the press? I know of no instance in which the press hath ever been the object of notice in this province, except on account of the Tory letter from Kent County, which was first published last spring in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, and which it was the duty of every good man to detect, because the *honesty* of the press is as great an object to society as the *freedom* of it.

\* Temporary commander of a force of Tories, mostly Scots, defeated at Moore's Creek, N.C., February 27, 1776, by Colonel Caswell.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

If this is the restraint you complain of, we know your true character at once; and that it is so, appears evident from the expression which immediately follows the above quotation: your words are, “ Nevertheless, *we* readily submitted to it while the least colorable pretense could be offered for requiring such a submission.”

Who submitted, Cato? *we* Whigs, or *we* Tories? Until you clear up this, Sir, you must content yourself with being ranked among the rankest of the *writing* Tories; because no other body of men can have any pretense to complain of want of freedom of the press. It is not your throwing out, now and then, little popular phrases which can protect you from suspicion; they are only the gildings under which the poison is conveyed, and without which you dared not to renew your attempts on the virtue of the people.

Cato’s second letter, or the greatest part thereof, is taken up with the reverence due from us to the persons and authority of the Commissioners, whom Cato vainly and ridiculously styles **AMBASSADORS** *coming to negotiate a peace*. How came Cato not to be let a little better into the secret? The act of Parliament which describes the powers of these men hath been in this city upwards of a month, and in the hands, too, of

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cato's friends. No, Sir, they are not the *Ambassadors of peace*, but the distributors of pardons, mischief, and insult.

Cato discovers a gross ignorance of the British Constitution in supposing that these men *can* be empowered to act as ambassadors. To prevent his future errors I will set him right.

The present war differs from every other, in this instance, viz. that it is not carried under the prerogative of the Crown as other wars have always been, but under the authority of the whole legislative power united; and as the barriers which stand in the way of a negotiation are not proclamations but acts of Parliament, it evidently follows, that were even the King of England here in person, he could not ratify the terms or conditions of a reconciliation; because, in the single character of King he could not stipulate for the repeal of any *acts* of Parliament, neither can the Parliament stipulate for him. There is no body of men more jealous of their privileges than the Commons: because they sell them. Mark that, Cato.

I have not the least doubt upon me but that their business (exclusive of granting us pardons) is downright bribery and corruption. It is the machine by which they effect all their plans. We

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ought to view them as enemies of a most dangerous species, and he who means not to be corrupted by them will enter his protest in time. Are they not the very men who are paid for voting in every measure against us, and ought we not to suspect their designs?

Can we view the barbarians as friends? Would it be prudent to trust the viper in our very bosoms? Or to suffer them to ramble at large among us while such doubtful characters as Cato have a being upon the continent? Yet let their persons be safe from injury and outrage—but trust them not.

Our business with them is short and explicit, viz.: We are desirous of peace, Gentlemen; we are ready to ratify the terms, and will virtuously fulfil the conditions thereof; but we should deserve all and every misery which tyranny can inflict, were we, after suffering such a repetition of savage barbarities, to come under your government again.

Cato, by way of stealing into credit, says, “that the contest we are engaged in is founded on the most noble and virtuous principles which can animate the mind of man. We are contending (says he) against an arbitrary Ministry for the rights of Englishmen.” No, Cato, we are

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

now contending against an arbitrary king to get clear of his tyranny. While the dispute rested in words only, it might be called “contending with the Ministry,” but since it is broken out into open war, it is high time to have done with such silly and water-gruel definitions.

But it suits not Cato to speak the truth. It is his interest to dress up the sceptered savage in the mildest colors. Cato’s patent for a large tract of land is yet unsigned. Alas poor Cato!

Cato proceeds very importantly to tell us, *“that the eyes of all Europe are upon us.”* This stale and hackneyed phrase hath had a regular descent, from many of the King’s speeches down to several of the speeches in Parliament; from thence it took a turn among the little wits and bucks of St. James’s; till after suffering all the torture of senseless repetition, and being reduced to a state of vagrancy, it was charitably picked up to embellish the second letter of Cato.

It is truly of the bug-bear kind, contains no meaning, and the very using of it discovers a barrenness of invention. It signifies nothing to tell us “that the eyes of all Europe are upon us,” unless he had likewise told us what they are looking at us *for:* which as he hath not done, I will. *They* are looking at us, Cato, in hopes of seeing a final

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

separation between Britain and the colonies, that they, the *lookers-on*, may partake of a free and uninterrupted trade with the whole continent of America. Cato, thou reasonest *wrong*.

For the present, Sir, farewell. I have seen thy soliloquy and despise it. Remember thou hast thrown me the glove, Cato, and either thee or I must tire. I fear not the field of fair debate, but thou hast stepped aside and made it personal. Thou hast tauntingly called on me by name; and if I cease to hunt thee from every lane and lurking hole of mischief, and bring thee not a trembling culprit before the public bar, then brand me with reproach, by naming me in the list of your confederates.

### THE FORESTER.

*Philadelphia, March 28, 1776.*

## II

### To CATO\*

**B**EFORE I enter on the more immediate purpose of this letter, I think it necessary, once for all, to endeavor to settle as clearly as I can, the following point, viz.: How far personality is concerned in any political debate. The general maxim is, that measures and not men are the thing in question, and the maxim is undeniably just when rightly understood. Cato, as a refuge for himself, hath quoted the author of "Common Sense" who in his preface says, "That the object for attention is the *doctrine itself* not the *man*," that is, not the *rank* or *condition* of the man. For whether he is with those whose fortune is *already* made, or with those whose fortune is *yet* to make, or among those who seldom think or care whether they make *any*, is a matter wholly out of the question and entirely confined to himself.

But the political characters, political dependencies, and political connections of men, being of a public nature, differ exceedingly from the circumstances of private life; and are in many

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, April 10, 1776.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

instances so nearly related to the measures they propose, that to prevent our being deceived by the last, we *must* be acquainted with the first.

A total ignorance of men lays us under the danger of mistaking plausibility for principle. Could the wolf bleat like the lamb the flock would soon be enticed into ruin; wherefore, to prevent the mischief, he ought to be *seen* as well as *heard*. There never was nor ever will be, nor ever ought to be, any important political debate carried on, in which a total separation in all cases between men and measures could be admitted with sufficient safety.

When hypocrisy shall be banished from the earth, the knowledge of men will be unnecessary, because their measures cannot then be fraudulent; but until that time come (which never will come) they ought, under proper limitations, to go together. We have already too much secrecy in some things and too little in others. Were men more known, and measures more concealed, we should have fewer hypocrites and more security.

As the chief design of these letters is to detect and expose the falsehoods and fallacious reasonings of Cato, he must not expect (when detected) to be treated like one who had debated

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

fairly; for I will be bold to say and to prove, that a grosser violation of truth and reason scarcely ever came from the pen of a writer; and the explanations which he hath endeavored to impose on the passages which he hath quoted from “Common Sense,” are such as never existed in the mind of the author, nor can they be drawn from the words themselves.

Neither must Cato expect to be spared, where his carelessness of expression, and visible want of compassion and sentiment, shall give occasion to raise any moral or philosophical reflection thereon. These things being premised, I now proceed to review the latter part of Cato’s second letter.

In this place Cato begins his first attack on “Common Sense,” but as he only discovers his ill will, and neither offers any arguments against it, nor makes any quotations from it, I should in this place pass him by, were it not for the following strange assertion: “If little notice,” says Cato (*little opposition he means*) “has yet been taken of the publications concerning independence, it is neither owing to the popularity of the doctrine, the unanswerable nature of the arguments, nor the fear of opposing them, as the vanity of the author would suggest.”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

As Cato has given us the *negative* reasons, he ought to have given us the *real* ones, for as he *positively* tells what it was *not* owing to, he undoubtedly knows what it *was* owing to that *he* delayed *his* answers so long; but instead of telling us that (which perhaps is not proper to be told) he flies from the argument with the following plump declarations, “Nine-tenths of the people of Pennsylvania,” says he, “yet abhor the doctrine.” But stop, Cato! not quite so fast, friend! If this be true, how came they, so late as the second of March last, to elect for a burgess of this city, a gentleman\* of known *independent principles*, and one of the very few to whom the author of “Common Sense” showed some part thereof while in manuscript?

Cato is just as unfortunate in the following paragraph: “Those,” says he, “who made the appeal (that is, published the pamphlet) have but little cause to triumph in its success. Of this they seem sensible: and, like true quacks, are constantly pestering us with additional doses till the stomachs of their patients *begin wholly to revolt.*” It is Cato’s hard fate to be always detected: for perhaps there never was a pamphlet, since the use of letters were known, about which

\* David Rittenhouse, the astronomer.—Ed.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

so little pains were taken, and of which so great a number went off in so short a time; I am certain that I am within compass when I say one hundred and twenty thousand.

The book was turned upon the world like an orphan, to shift for itself; no plan was formed to support it, neither hath the author ever published a syllable on the subject, from that time till after the appearance of Cato's fourth letter; wherefore what Cato says of additional doses administered by the author is an absolute falsity; besides which, it comes with an ill grace from one, who frequently publishes two letters in a week, and often puts them both into one paper—Cato here, Cato there, look where you will.

At the distance of a few lines from the above quotations, Cato presents us with a retrospective view of our former state, in which, says he, “we considered our connection with Great Britain as our chief happiness—we flourished, grew rich, and populous to a degree not to be paralleled in history.” This assertion is truly of the legerdemain kind, appearing at once both right and wrong.

All writers on Cato's side have used the same argument and conceived themselves invinci-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ble; nevertheless, a single expression properly placed dissolves the charm, for the cheat lies in putting the *time* for the *cause*. For the cheat lies in putting the *consequence* for the *cause*; for had we not *flourished* the *connection* had never *existed* or never been *regarded*, and this is fully proved by the neglect shown to the first settlers, who had every difficulty to struggle with, unnoticed and unassisted by the British Court.

Cato proceeds very industriously to sum up the former declarations of Congress and other public bodies, some of which were made upwards of a year ago, to prove, that the doctrine of independence hath no sanction from them. To this I shall give Cato one general answer which is, that had he produced a thousand more such authorities they would *now* amount to nothing, they are out of date; times and things are altered; the true character of the King was but little known among the body of the people of America a year ago; willing to believe him good, they fondly called him so, but have since found that Cato's Royal Sovereign, is a Royal Savage.

Cato hath introduced the above-mentioned long quotation of authorities against independence, with the following curious preface: "Nor

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

have many weeks," says he, "yet elapsed since the first open proposition for independence was published to the world. By what men of consequence this scheme is supported or whether by any, may possibly be the subject of future inquiry. Certainly it hath no countenance from the Congress, to whose sentiments we look up with reverence. On the contrary, it is *directly repugnant to every* declaration of that respectable body."

Now, Cato, thou hast nailed thyself with a witness! Directly repugnant to every declaration of that respectable body! Mind that, Cato, and mark what follows. It appears by an extract from the resolves of the Congress, printed in the front of the oration delivered by Dr. Smith, in honor of that brave man General Montgomery, that he, the Doctor, was appointed by that honorable body to compose and deliver the same; in the *execution* of which, the orator exclaimed loudly against the doctrine of independence; but when a motion was afterward made in Congress, (according to former usage) to return the *orator* thanks, and request a copy for the press, the motion was rejected from every part of the house and thrown out without a division.

I now proceed to Cato's third letter, in the opening of which he deserts the subject of inde-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

pendence, and renews his attack on the Committee.

Cato's manner of writing has as much order in it as the motion of a squirrel. He frequently writes as if he knew not what to write next, just as the other jumps about, only because it cannot stand still. Though I am sometimes angry with him for his unprincipled method of writing and reasoning, I cannot help laughing at other times for his want of ingenuity, one instance of which he gives us in kindly warning us against "*the foul pages of interested writers, and strangers intermeddling in our affairs.*"

Were I to reply seriously my answer would be this: Thou seemest then ignorant, Cato, of that ancient and numerous order which are related to each other in all and every part of the globe—with whom the kindred is not formed by place or accident, but in principle and sentiment. A free-man, Cato, is a stranger nowhere—a slave, everywhere.

But were I disposed to answer merrily, I should tell him, that as his notions of friendship were so very narrow and local, he obliges me to understand, that when he addresses the people with the tender title of "*my dear countrymen*" which frequently occurs in his letters, he particu-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

larly means the long list of Macs published in Donald M'Donald's commission.\*

In this letter Cato recommends the pamphlet called "Plain Truth," a performance which hath withered away like a sickly, unnoticed weed, and which even its advocates are displeased at, and the author ashamed to own. About the middle of this third letter, Cato gives notice of his being ready to take the field. "I now proceed," says he, "to give my reasons." How Cato hath managed the attack we are now to examine; and the first remark I shall offer on his conduct is, that he hath most unluckily entered the list on the wrong side, and discharged his first fire among the Tories.

In order to prove this, I shall give the paragraph entire:—"AGRICULTURE and COMMERCE," says Cato, "have hitherto been the happy employments, by which these middle colonies have risen into wealth and importance. By *them* the face of the country has been changed from a barren wilderness, into the hospitable abodes of peace and plenty. Without *them* we had either never existed as Americans, or existed only as

\* M'Donald or Macdonald was Commander-in-chief of the Tory forces in North Carolina. Most of them were Highlanders who had emigrated to America after the battle of Culloden.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

savages. The oaks would still have possessed their *native spots of earth*, and never have *appeared in the form of ships and houses*. What are now well cultivated fields, or flourishing cities, would have remained only the solitary haunts of wild beasts or of men equally wild."

The reader cannot help perceiving that through this whole paragraph *our connection* with Britain is left entirely out of the question, and our present greatness attributed to external causes, *agriculture* and *commerce*. This is a strange way, Cato, of overturning "Common Sense," which says, "I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to show a single advantage which this continent can reap by being connected with Great Britain; I repeat," says he, "the challenge; not a single advantage is derived. *Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe; and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.*"

Cato introduces his next paragraph with saying, "that much of our former felicity was owing to the protection of England *is not to be denied.*" Yes, Cato, I deny it wholly, and for the following clear and simple reasons, viz., that our being connected with, and submitting to be protected by her, made, and will still make, all *her* enemies, *our*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

enemies, or as “Common Sense” says, “set us at variance with nations who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint.”

The following passage is so glaringly absurd that I shall make but a short comment upon it. “And if hereafter,” says Cato, “in the fulness of time, it shall be necessary to separate from the land that gave birth to [some of] our ancestors, it will be in a state of perfect manhood, when we can fully wield our *own arms*, and *protect our commerce and coasts by our own fleets.*”

But how are we to come by *fleets*, Cato, while Britain hath the government of the continent? Unless we are to suppose, as you have hinted in the former paragraph, that our oaks are to *grow* into ships, and be launched self-built from their “native spots of earth.”

It is Cato’s misfortune as a writer, not to distinguish justly between magic and imagination; while on the other hand there are many passages in his letters so seriously and deliberately false, that nothing but the most hardened effrontery, and a cast of mind bordering upon impiety, would have uttered. He frequently forces me out of the common track of civil language, in order to do him justice; moderation and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

temper being really unequal to the task of exposing him.

Cato, unless he meant to destroy the ground he stood upon, ought not to have let the following paragraph be seen. “If our present *differences*,” says he, “can be accommodated, there is scarce a probability that Britain will ever renew her late fatal system of policy, or attempt again to employ force against us.”

How came Cato to admit the *probability* of our being brought *again* into the same bloody and expensive situation? But it is worth remarking, that those who write without principle, cannot help sometimes blundering upon truth. Then there is no *real security*, Cato, in this *reconciliation* of yours on *constitutional principles*? It still amounts to nothing; and after all this expense of life and wealth, we are to rest at last upon hope, hazard, and uncertainty. Why then, by all that is sacred, “*it is time to part.*”

But Cato, after admitting the *probability* of our being brought *again* into the same situation, proceeds to tell us how we are to conduct ourselves in the second quarrel; and that is, by the very same methods we have done the present one, viz., to expend millions of treasure, and thousands of lives, in order to patch up a *second union*,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

that the way may be open for a *third quarrel*; and in this endless and checkered round of blood and treacherous peace, hath Cato disposed of the continent of America.

That I may not be thought to do Cato injustice, I have quoted the whole passage: “But should Britain be so infatuated,” says he, “at any future period, as to think of subjugating us, either by the arts of corruption, or oppressive exertions of power, can we entertain a doubt but we shall AGAIN, with a virtue equal to the present and with the *weapons of defense in our hands* (when necessary) convince her that we are willing by a *constitutional connection* with her, to afford and receive reciprocal benefits; but although subjects of the same King, we will not consent to be her slaves.”—Come hither, ye *little ones*, whom the poisonous hand of Cato is rearing for destruction, and remember the page that warns ye of your ruin.

Cato, in many of his expressions, discovers all that calm command over the passions and feelings which always distinguishes the man who hath expelled them from his heart. Of this careless kind is the before mentioned phrase, “our present differences,” and the same unpardonable negligence is conveyed in the following one: “*Al-*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*though I consider her,*" says he, "as having in her late conduct toward us, acted the part of a cruel stepdame." Wonderful sensibility indeed! All the havoc and desolation of unnatural war; the destruction of thousands; the burning and depopulating of towns and cities; the ruin and separation of friends and families, are just sufficient to extort from Cato, *this one* callous confession.

But the cold and creeping soul of Cato is a stranger to the manly powers of sympathetic sorrow. He *moves* not, nor *can* he move in so pure an element. Accustomed to lick the hand that hath made him visible, and to breathe the gross atmosphere of servile and sordid dependence, his soul would *now* starve on virtue, and suffocate in the clear region of disinterested friendship.

Surely when Cato sat down to write, he either did not expect to be called to an account, or was totally regardless of reputation, otherwise he would not have endeavored to persuade the public that the doctrine of independence was broached in a kind of seditious manner, at a time "*when,*" says he, "*some gleams of reconciliation began first to break in upon us.*"

Come forth, Cato, and prove the assertion! Where do these gleams of reconciliation spring from? Are they to be found in the King's speech,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

in the address of either House of Parliament, or in the Act which lets loose a whole kennel of pirates upon our property, and commissions another set to insult with pardons the very men whom their own measures had sought to ruin?

Either prove the assertion, Cato, or take the reward of it, for it is the part of an incendiary to endeavor with specious falsehoods to mislead the credulity of unwary readers. Cato likewise says, that, while we continue united, and renounce all thoughts of independence, “we have the *utmost assurance* of obtaining a *full redress* of our *grievances*, and an *ample security* against any *future violation* of our *just rights*.” If Cato means to insinuate that we have *received* such an assurance, let him read the conclusion of the preceding paragraph again. The same answer will serve for both.

Perhaps, when we recollect the long and unabated cruelty of the British Court toward us, and remember the many prayers which we have put up both *to* them and *for* them, the following piece of declamation of Cato can hardly be equaled either for absurdity or insanity:

“If we now effect independence,” says he, “we must be considered as a *faithless people in the sight of all mankind, and could scarcely ex-*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*pect the confidence of any nation upon earth, or look up to heaven for its approving sentence."*

Art thou mad, Cato, or art thou foolish—or art thou *both*—or art thou *worse* than both? In *this passage* thou hast fairly gone beyond me. I have not language to bring thee back. Thou art safely intrenched indeed! Rest therefore in thy stronghold till *He* who fortified thee in it shall come and fetch thee out.

Cato seems to be possessed of that jesuitical cunning which always endeavors to disgrace what it cannot disprove; and this he sometimes effects, by unfairly introducing *our* terms into *his* arguments, and thereby begets a monster which he sends round the country for a show, and tells the good people that the name of it is *independence*.

Of this character are several passages in his fourth and fifth letters, particularly when he quotes the term "*foreign assistance*," which he ungenerously explains into a surrender of the continent to France and Spain. Such an unfair and sophistical reasoner doth not deserve the civility of good manners.

He creates, likewise, the same confusion by frequently using the word *peace* for *union*, and thereby charges us falsely by representing us as being determined to "reject all proposition

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of *peace*.” Whereas, our wish is *peace* but not *re-union*; and though we would gladly listen to the former, we are determined to resist every proposal for the latter, *come from where it will*; being fully persuaded, that in the present state of affairs *separation of governments is the only and best thing that can be done for both countries.*

The following case is unjustly put. “There never was a war,” says Cato, “so implacable, even among states naturally rivals and enemies, or among savages themselves, as not to have *peace* for its object as well as the end.” But was there ever a war, Cato, which had *union* for its object? No. What Cato means by states naturally rivals and enemies, I shall not inquire into, but this I know (for myself at least) that it was not in the power of France or Spain, or all the other powers in Europe, to have given such a wound, or raised us to such a mortal hatred as Britain hath done.

We feel the same kind of undescribed anger at her conduct, as we would at the sight of an animal devouring its young; and this particular species of anger is not generated in the transitory temper of the man, but in the chaste and undefiled womb of nature.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cato, toward the conclusion of his third letter, (at which place I shall leave him for the present,) compares the state of Britain and America to the quarrels of lovers, and from thence infers a probability, that our affections will be renewed thereby. This I cannot help looking on as one of the most unnatural and distorted similes that can be drawn.

Come hither ye that are lovers, or ye that *have been* lovers, and decide the controversy between us! What comparison is there between the soft murmurs of an heart mourning in secret, and the loud horrors of war—between the silent tears of pensive sorrow, and rivers of wasted blood—between the *sweet* strife of affection, and the *bitter* strife of death—between the curable calamities of pettish lovers, and the sad sight of a thousand slain! “Get thee behind me,” Cato, for thou hast not the feelings of a man.

THE FORESTER.

*Philadelphia, April 8, 1776.*

### III

#### To CATO \*

CATO'S partizans may call me furious: I regard it not. There are men, too, who have not virtue enough to be angry and that crime perhaps is Cato's. He who dares not offend cannot be honest. Having thus balanced the charge, I proceed to Cato's fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh letters, all of which, as they contain but little matter, I shall dismiss with as little trouble and less formality.

His fourth letter is introduced with a punning soliloquy—Cato's title to soliloquies is indisputable; because no man cares for his company † However, he disowns the writing it, and assures his readers that it “was *really* put into his hands.” I always consider this confirming mode of expression as betraying a suspicion of one's self; and in this place it amounts to just as much as if Cato had said, “you know my *failing*, Sirs, but what I tell you now is really true.”

Well, be it so, Cato; you shall have all the

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, April 24, 1776.

† As this piece may possibly fall into the hands of some who are not acquainted with the word soliloquy, for their information the sense of it is given, viz. “talking to one's self.”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

credit you ask for; and as to when or where or how you got it, who was the author or who the giver, I shall not inquire after; being fully convinced, by the poetical merit of the performance, that tho' the writer of it may be an *Allen*, he'll never be a *Ramsay*.\* Thus much for the soliloquy; and if this gentle chastisement should be the means of preventing Cato or his colleague from mingling their punning nonsense with subjects of such a serious nature as the present one truly is, it will answer *one* of the ends it was intended for.

Cato's fourth, and the greatest part of his fifth letter, are constructed on a false meaning uncivilly imposed on a passage quoted from "Common Sense"; and for which, the author of that pamphlet hath a right to expect from Cato the usual concessions. I shall quote the passage entire, with Cato's additional meaning, and the inferences which he draws therefrom.

He introduces it with saying, "In my remarks on the pamphlet before me I shall first consider those arguments on which, he (the au-

\* Andrew Allen, Attorney-general of Pennsylvania, a zealous patriot, at first, became a Loyalist. William Allen, Chief-justice of Pennsylvania, also a Loyalist, went to England in 1774 and there published "The American Crisis," a plan for restoring the dependence of the colonies. "Ramsay" is a reference to Allen Ramsay, the Scottish poet.—*Ed.*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

thor) appears to lay his chief stress; and these are collected under four heads in his conclusion, one of which is, '*It is the custom of nations when any two are at war, for some other powers not engaged in the quarrel, to step in by way of mediators, and bring about the preliminaries of a peace; but while America calls herself the subject of Great Britain, no power, however well disposed she may be, can offer her mediation.'*'

The meaning contained in this passage is so exceedingly plain, and expressed in such easy and familiar terms, that it scarcely admits of being made plainer. No one, I think, could have understood it any other wise, than that while we continue to call ourselves British subjects, the quarrel between us can only be called a *family quarrel*, in which, it would be just as indelicate for any other nation to advise, or any ways to meddle or make, even with their offers of mediation, as it would be for a third person to interfere in a quarrel between a man and his wife.

Whereas were we to make use of that natural right which all other nations have done before us, and erect a government of our own, *independent of all the world*, the quarrel could then be no longer called a *family quarrel*, but a regular war be-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

tween the two powers of Britain and America, in the same manner as one carried on between England and France; and in this state of political separation, the neutral powers might kindly render their mediation (as hath always been the practise) and bring about the preliminaries of a *peace* —not a *union*, Cato, that is quite another thing.

But instead of Cato's taking it in this easy and natural sense, he flies away on a wrong scent, *charges the author with proposing to call in foreign assistance*; and under this wilful falsehood raises up a mighty cry after nothing at all. He begins his wild and unintelligible comment in the following manner: “Is this,” says he, (meaning the passage already quoted) “*common sense*, or *common nonsense*? Surely peace\* with Great Britain cannot be the object of this writer, after the horrible character he has given of the people of that country, and telling us, that reconciliation with them would be our ruin.”

The latter part of the paragraph seems to cast some light upon the former, although it contradicts it, for these mediators are not to interfere for making up the quarrel, but to widen it by supporting us in a declaration, That we are not

\* It is a strange thing that Cato cannot be taught to distinguish between peace and union.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the subjects of Great Britain. A new sort of business truly for mediators. “But this,” continues Cato, “leads us directly to the *main inquiry—What foreign power is able to give us this support?*” What support, Cato? The passage you have quoted neither says a syllable, nor insinuates a hint about support:—It speaks *only* of neutral powers in the neighborly character of mediators between those which are at war; and says it is the custom of European courts to do so. Cato hath already raised commissioners into ambassadors; but how he could transform mediators into men in arms, and mediation into military alliance, is surpassingly strange.

Read the part over again, Cato; if you find I have charged you wrongfully, and will point it out, I will engage that the author of “Common Sense” shall ask your pardon in the public papers, with his name to it: but if the error be yours, the concession on your part follows as a duty.

Though I am fully persuaded that Cato does not believe one half of what himself has written, he nevertheless takes amazing pains to *frighten* his readers into a belief of the whole. Tells them of foreign troops (which he supposes we are going to send for) ravaging up and down the coun-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

try; of their “ bloody massacres, unrelenting persecutions, which would *harrow up* (says he) *the very souls of protestants and freemen.*” Were they coming, Cato, which no one ever dreamed of but yourself (for thank God, we want them not,) it would be impossible for them to exceed, or even to equal, the cruelties practised by the British Army in the East Indies. The tying men to the mouths of cannon and “*blowing them away*” was never acted by any but an English general, or approved by any but a British Court.\* Read the proceedings of the Select Committee on Indian Affairs.

From temporal fears Cato proceeds to spiritual ones, and in a hypocritical panic, asks, “ To whose share will Pennsylvania fall—that of his most Catholic, or his most Christian King? I confess,” continues he, “that these questions stagger me.”

I don’t wonder at it, Cato—I am glad to hear that some kind of remorse hath overtaken you—that you begin to *feel* that you are “heavy laden.” You have had a long run, and the stoutest heart must fail at last.

\* Lord Clive, the chief of Eastern plunderers, received the thanks of Parliament for “his honorable conduct in the East Indies.”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cato, perceiving that the falsehoods in his fourth letter passed unreproved, ventured boldly on a fifth, in which he continues, enlarging on the same convenient bug-bear.

“In my last,” says he, “some notice was taken of the dangerous proposition held up by the author of ‘Common Sense,’ for having recourse to foreign assistance.” When will Cato learn to speak the truth! The assistance which we hope for from France is not armies, (we want them not) but arms and ammunition. We have already received into this province only, near two hundred tons of saltpeter and gunpowder, besides muskets.

Surely we may continue to cultivate a useful acquaintance, without such malevolent beings as Cato raising his barbarous slander thereon. At *this time* it is not only illiberal, but impolitic, and perhaps dangerous, to be pouring forth such torrents of abuse, as his fourth and fifth letters contain, against the only power that in articles of defense hath supplied our hasty wants.

Cato, after expending near two letters in beating down an idol which himself *only* had set up, probably congratulates himself on the defeat, and marches off to new exploits, leaving behind him the following proclamation: “Having thus,”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

says Cato, “*dispatched his* (the author of “Common Sense’s”) *main argument for independence*, which he founds on the necessity of calling in *foreign assistance*, I proceed to examine some other parts of his work.”

Not a syllable Cato, doth any part of the pamphlet in question say of calling in foreign assistance, or even forming military alliances. The dream is wholly your own, and is directly repugnant both to the letter and spirit of every page in the piece.

The idea which “Common Sense” constantly holds up, is to have nothing to do with the political affairs of Europe. “As Europe,” says the pamphlet, “is our market for trade, we ought to form no political connections with *any part of it*. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of all European contentions.” And where it proposes sending a manifesto to foreign courts (which it is high time to do) it recommends it only for the purpose of announcing to them the *impossibility of our living any longer under the British Government, and of assuring such courts of our peaceable disposition toward them, and of our desire of entering into trade with them.*” Learn to be an honest man, Cato, and then thou wilt not be thus exposed.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

I have been the more particular in detecting Cato here, because it is on this *bubble* that his air-built battery against independence is raised—a poor foundation indeed! which even the point of a pin, or a pen, if you please, can demolish with a touch, and bury the formidable Cato beneath the ruins of a vapor.

From this part of his fifth letter to the end of his seventh, he entirely deserts the subject of independence, and sets up the proud standard of kings, in preference to a republican form of government. My remarks on this part of the subject will be general and concise.

In this part of the debate Cato shelters himself chiefly in quotations from other authors, without reasoning much on the matter himself;\* in answer to which, I present him with a string of maxims and reflections, drawn from the nature of things, without borrowing from anyone.

\*The following is an instance of Cato's method of conducting an argument: "If hereditary succession," says 'Common Sense' (meaning succession of monarchial government) "did insure a race of good and wise men, it would have the seal of divine authority"; "thus we find him," says Cato, "with his own hand affixing the seal of heaven to what he before told us the devil invented and the Almighty entered his protest against." Cato's seventh letter.—This is a strange argument indeed, Cato, or rather it is no argument at all, for hereditary succession does not insure a race of good and wise men, consequently, has not the seal of divine authority.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Cato may observe, that I scarcely ever quote; the reason is, I always think. But to return.

Government should always be considered as a matter of convenience, not of right. The Scripture institutes no particular form of government, but it enters a protest against the monarchical form; and a negation on *one* thing, where *two only* are offered, and *one* must be chosen, amounts to an affirmative on the *other*. Monarchical government was first set up by the heathens, and the Almighty permitted it to the Jews as a punishment. “*I gave them a king in mine anger.*”—Hosea xiii. 2. A republican form of government is pointed out by nature—kingly governments by an inequality of power. In republican governments, the leaders of the people, if improper, are removable by vote; kings, only by arms: an unsuccessful vote in the first case leaves the voter safe; but an unsuccessful attempt in the latter, is death. Strange, that that which is our *right* in the *one*, should be our *ruin* in the *other*.

From which reflection follows this maxim: that that mode of government in which our *right* becomes our *ruin*, cannot be the *right one*. If all human nature be corrupt, it is needless to strengthen the corruption by establishing

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

a succession of kings, who, be they ever so base, are still to be obeyed; for the manners of a court will always have an influence over the morals of a people.

A republican government hath more *true grandeur* in it than a kingly one. On the part of the public it is more consistent with free-men to appoint their rulers than to have them born; and on the part of those who preside, it is far nobler to be a ruler by the choice of the people, than a king by the chance of birth. Every honest delegate is more than a monarch. Disorders will unavoidably happen in all states, but monarchical governments are the most subject thereto, because the balance hangs uneven.

*“Nineteen rebellions and eight civil wars in England since the Conquest.”* Whatever commotions are reproduced in republican states, are not produced by a republican spirit, but by those who seek to extinguish it. A republican state cannot produce its own destruction, it can only suffer it. No nation of people, in their true senses, when seriously reflecting on the rank which God hath given them and the reasoning faculties He hath blessed them with, would ever, of their own consent, give any *one man* a negative power over the whole. No man since the Fall hath ever been

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

equal to the trust, wherefore 'tis insanity in us to intrust them with it; and in this sense, all those who have had it have done us right by abusing us into reason.

Nature seems sometimes to laugh at mankind, by giving them so many fools for kings; at other times, she punishes their folly by giving them tyrants; but England must have offended highly to be cursed with both in one. Rousseau proposed a plan for establishing a perpetual European peace; which was, for every state in Europe to send ambassadors to form a general council, and when any difference happened between any two nations, to refer the matter to arbitration instead of going to arms.

This would be forming a kind of European republic: But the proud and plundering spirit of kings hath not peace for its object. They look not at the good of mankind. They set not out upon that plan: And if the history of the Creation and the history of kings be compared together, the result will be this—that God hath made a world, and kings have robbed him of it.

But that which sufficiently establishes the republican mode of government, in preference to a kingly one, even when all other arguments are left out, is this simple truth, that all men are re-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

publicans by nature, and royalists only by fashion. And this is fully proved by that passionate adoration which all men show to that great and almost only remaining bulwark of natural rights, *trial by juries*, which is founded on a pure republican basis. Here the power of kings is shut out. No royal negative can enter this court. The jury, which is here supreme, is a *Republic*, a body of *Judges chosen from among the people*.

The charter which secures this freedom in England, was formed, not in the Senate, but in the field; and insisted on by the people, not granted by the Crown; the Crown in that instance *granted nothing*, but only renounced its former tyrannies, and bound itself over to its future good behavior. It was the compromise, by which the wearer of it made his peace with the people, and the condition on which he was suffered to reign.

Here ends my reply to all the letters which have at present appeared under the signature of Cato, being at this time seven in number. I have made no particular remarks on his last two, which treat only of the mode of government, but answered them generally. In one place I observe, he accuses the writer of "Common Sense" with inconsistency in having declared, "That no man was a warmer wisher for reconciliation than him-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

self, before the fatal nineteenth of April, 1775"; "that is," says Cato, "reconciliation to monarchical government."

To which I reply that *war* ought to be no man's *wish*, neither ought any man to perplex a state, already formed, with his private opinions; "the mode of government being a proper consideration of those countries" only "which have their governments yet to form."

On a review of the ground which I have gone over in Cato's letters (exclusive of what I have omitted) I find the following material charges against him:

*First.* He hath accused the Committee with crimes generally; stated none, nor proved, nor attempted to prove any.

*N.B.* The pretense of charging the acts of a body of men on individuals, is too slender to be admitted.\*

*Secondly.* He hath falsely complained to the public of the restraint of the press.

\*Cato and I differ materially in our opinion of committees: I consider them as the only constitutional bodies at present in this province, and that for the following reason: they were duly elected by the people, and cheerfully do the service for which they were elected. The House of Assembly were likewise elected by the people, but do the business for which they were not elected. Their authority is truly unconstitutional, being self-created. My charge is as a body, and not as individuals.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*Thirdly.* He hath wickedly asserted that “gleams of reconciliation hath lately broken in upon us,” thereby grossly deceiving the people.

*Fourthly.* He hath insinuated, as if he wished the public to believe, that we had *received* “the utmost assurance of having all our grievances redressed, and an ample security against any future violation of our just rights.”

*Fifthly.* He hath spread false alarms of calling in foreign troops.

*Sixthly.* He hath turned the Scripture into a jest. Ez. 35.

These falsehoods, if uncontradicted, might have passed for truths, and the minds of persons remote from better intelligence might have been greatly embarrassed thereby. Let our opinions be what they will, truth as to facts should be strictly adhered to. It was this affecting consideration that drew out the FORESTER (a perfect volunteer) to the painful task of writing three long letters, and occasioned to the public the trouble of reading them.

Having, for the present, closed my correspondence with Cato, I shall conclude this letter with a well-meant, affectionate address

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

### *To the People*

*It is not a time to trifle.* Men, who know they deserve nothing from their country, and whose hope is on the arm that hath fought to enslave ye, may hold out to you, as Cato hath done, the false light of reconciliation. There is no such thing. 'Tis gone! 'Tis past! The grave hath parted us—and death, in the persons of the slain, hath cut the thread of life between Britain and America.

Conquest, and not reconciliation, is the plan of Britain. But admitting even the last hope of the Tories to happen, which is, that our enemies after a long succession of losses, wearied and disabled, should despairingly throw down their arms and propose a reunion; in that case, what is to be done? Are defeated and disappointed tyrants to be considered like mistaken and converted friends? Or would it be right, to receive those for governors, who, had they been conquerors, would have hung us up for traitors? Certainly not.

Reject the offer then, and propose another; which is, *we will make peace with you as with enemies, but we will never reunite with you as friends.* This effected, and ye secure to your-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

selves the pleasing prospect of an eternal peace. America, remote from all the wrangling world, may live at ease. Bounded by the ocean, and backed by the wilderness, who hath she to fear, but her God?

Be not deceived. It is not a little that is at stake. Reconciliation will not now go down, even if it were offered. 'Tis a dangerous question; for the eyes of all men begin to open. There is now no secret in the matter; there ought to be none. It is a case that concerns every man, and every man ought to lay it to heart. He that *is* here and he that was *born* here are alike concerned. It is needless, too, to split the business into a thousand parts, and perplex it with endless and fruitless investigations, in the manner that a writer signed a COMMON MAN hath done.

This unparalleled contention of nations is not to be settled like a schoolboy's task of pounds, shillings, pence, and fractions. That writer, though he may mean well, is strangely below the mark: for the first and great question, and that which involves every other in it, and from which every other will flow, is *happiness*. Can this continent be happy under the government of Great Britain or not? Secondly, Can she be happy under a government of our own?

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

To live beneath the authority of those whom we cannot love, is misery, slavery, or what name you please. In that case, there will never be peace. Security will be a thing unknown, because a treacherous friend in power is the most dangerous of enemies. The answer to the second question, Can America be happy under a government of her own, is short and simple, viz.: As happy as she please; she hath a blank sheet to write upon. Put it not off too long.\*

Painful as the task of speaking truth must sometimes be, yet I cannot avoid giving the following hint, because much, nay almost everything depends upon it; and that is, *a thorough knowledge of the persons whom we trust.* It is the duty of the public, at this time, to scrutinize closely into the conduct of their committee members, members of Assembly, and delegates in Congress; to know what they do, and their motives for so doing. Without doing this, we shall never know who to confide in; but shall constantly mistake friends for enemies, and enemies for friends, till in the confusion of persons we sacrifice the cause.

I am led to this reflection by the following circumstance: That the gentleman to whom the

\* Forget not the hapless African.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

unwise and arbitrary instructions to the delegates of this province owe their being, and who hath bestowed all his power to support them, is said to be the same person who, when the ships now on the stocks were wanting timber, *refused to sell it*, and thus by preventing our strength to cry out of our insufficiency.

But his hour of fame is past—he is hastening to his political exit.

THE FORESTER.

## IV\*

**W**HOEVER will take the trouble of attending to the progress and changeability of times and things, and the conduct of mankind thereon, will find, that *extraordinary circumstances* do sometimes arise before us, of a species, either so purely natural or so perfectly original, that none but the man of nature can understand them. When precedents fail to spirit us, we must return to the first principles of things for information; and *think*, as if we were the *first men that thought*. And this is the true reason that, in the present state of affairs, the wise are becoming foolish and the foolish wise.

I am led to this reflection by not being able to account for the conduct of the Quakers on any other: for although they do not seem to perceive it themselves, yet it is amazing to hear with what unanswerable ignorance many of that body, wise in other matters, will discourse on the present one.

Did they hold places or commissions under the King, were they governors of provinces or had they any interest apparently distinct from

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, May 8, 1776.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

us, the mystery would cease; but as they have not, their folly is best attributed to that super-abundance of *worldly knowledge* which in original matters is too cunning to be wise. Back to the first plain path of nature, friends, and begin anew: for in this business your first footsteps were wrong. You have now traveled to the summit of inconsistency, and that with such accelerated rapidity as to acquire autumnal ripeness by the first of May. Now your *resting time* comes on. You have done your utmost and must abide the consequences.

Yet who can reflect on such conduct without feeling concern! Who can look, unaffected, on a body of *thoughtful* men, undoing in *one rash hour* the labor of seventy years: Or what can be said in their excuse, more, than that they have arrived at their second childhood, the infancy of three-score and ten.\*

\* The Quakers in 1704 who then made up the whole House of Assembly (in Pennsylvania) zealously guarded their own and the people's rights against the encroaching power of the Proprietor, who nevertheless submitted them by finding means to abolish the original charter and introduce another, of which they complained in the following words: "And then by a subtle contrivance and artifice, 'of thine,' laid deeper than the capacities of some could fathom, or the circumstances of many could admit time to consider of, a way was found out to lay the first charter aside and introduce another."—*Query*. Would these men have elected the proprietary persons which you have done?

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

But my chief design, in this letter, is to set forth the inconsistency, partiality, and injustice of the *dependent faction*, and like an honest man, who courts no favor, to show to them the dangerous ground they stand upon; in order to do which, I must refer to the *business, event, and probable consequences* of the late election.

The business of that day was to do what? Why, to elect four burgesses to assist those already elected, in conducting the military proceedings of this province, against the power of *that Crown* by whose authority they pretend to sit: and those gentlemen when elected, are according to the rules of that House (as the rest have done) to take an oath of allegiance to serve the same King against whom this province, with themselves at the head thereof, are at war: and a necessary qualification required of many voters was, that they likewise should swear allegiance to the same King against whose power the same House of Assembly had just before obliged them either to fine or take up arms. Did ever national hypocrisy arise to such a pitch as this!

Under the pretense of moderation we are running into the most damnable sins. It is now the duty of every man, from the pulpit and from the press, in his family and in the street, to cry

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

out against it. Good God! Have we no remembrance of duty left to the King of Heaven! No conscientious awe to restrain this sacrifice of sacred things? Is this our chartered privilege? This our boasted Constitution, that we can sin and feel it not? The clergy of the English Church, of which I profess myself a member, complain of *their* situation, and wish relief; in short, every *thinking man* must feel distress. Yet, to the credit of the people be it spoken, the sin lies not at their door. We can trace the iniquity in this province to the fountain head, and see by what delusions it has imposed on others. The guilt centers in a few, and flows from the same source, that a few years ago avariciously suffered the frontiers of this province to be deluged in blood; and though the vengeance of heaven hath slept since, it may awake too soon for their repose.

A motion was sometime ago made to elect a convention to take into consideration the state of the province. A more judicious proposal could not be thought of. Our present condition is alarming. We are worse off than other provinces, and such an inquiry is highly necessary. The House of Assembly in its present form is disqualified for such business, because it is a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

branch from that power against whom we are contending.

Besides, they are in intercourse with the King's representative, and the members which compose the House have, as *members thereof* taken an oath to discover to the King of England the very business which, in that inquiry, would unavoidably come before them. Their minds, too, are warped and prejudiced by the provincial instructions they have arbitrarily and without right issued forth. They are again improper because the inquiry would necessarily *extend to them as a body*, to see how far it is proper to trust men with such unlimited power as they have lately assumed.

In times like these, we must trace to the root and origin of things; it being the only way to become right, when we are got systematically wrong. The motion for a convention alarmed the Crown and proprietary dependents; but, to every man of reflection, it had a cordial and restorative quality. The case is, first, we are got wrong—secondly, how shall we get right? Not by a house of assembly; because *they* cannot sit as *judges, in a case, where their own existence under their present form and authority is to be judged of.*

However, the objectors found out a way, as

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

they thought, to supersede the necessity of a convention, by promoting a bill for augmenting the number of representatives; not perceiving at the same time that such an augmentation would *increase the necessity* of a convention; because, the more any power is augmented, which derives its authority from our enemies, the more unsafe and dangerous it becomes to us. Far be it from the writer of this to censure the individuals which compose that House; his aim being only against the chartered authority under which it acts.

However, the bill passed into a law (which shows, that in Pennsylvania, as well as in England, there is *no constitution*, but only *a temporary form of government*\*). While, in order to show the inconsistency of the House in its present state, the motion for a convention was postponed, and four conscientious, independent gentlemen were proposed as candidates, on the augmentation, who, had they been elected, would not have taken the oaths necessary to admit a person as member of that assembly. And in that case, the House would have had neither one kind of authority or another, while the old part remained sworn to divulge to the King what the new part thought

\* This distinction will be more fully explained in some future letter.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

it their duty to declare against him. Thus matters stood on the morning of election.

On our side, we had to sustain the loss of those good citizens who are now before the walls of Quebec, and other parts of the continent; while the Tories, by never stirring out, remain at home to take the advantage of elections; and this evil prevails more or less from the Congress down to the committees.

A numerous body of Germans of property, zealots in the cause of freedom, were likewise excluded for non-allegiance. Notwithstanding which, the Tory non-conformists, that is, those who are advertised as enemies to their country, were admitted to vote on the other side. A strange contradiction indeed! To which were added the testimonizing Quakers, who, after suffering themselves to be duped by the meanest of all passions, religious spleen, endeavor in a vague, uncharitable manner to possess the Roman Catholics of the same disease.

These parties, with such others as they could influence, were headed by the proprietary dependents to support the British and proprietary power against the public. They had pompously given out that nine-tenths of the people were on their side. A vast majority truly! But it so

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

happened that, notwithstanding the disadvantages we laid under of having many of our votes rejected, others disqualified for non-allegiance, with the great loss sustained by absentees, the maneuver of shutting up the doors between seven and eight o'clock, and circulating the report of adjourning, and finishing the next morning, by which several were deceived—it so happened, I say, that on casting up the tickets, the first in numbers on the dependent side, and the first on the independent side, viz., Clymer and Allen, were a tie: 923 each.\*

To the description which I have already given of those who are against us, I may add, that they have neither associated nor assisted, or but very few of them; that they are a collection of different bodies blended by accident, having no natural relation to each other; that they have agreed rather out of spite than right; and that, as they met by chance, they will dissolve away again for want of a cement.

On our side, our object was *single*, our cause was one; wherefore, we *cannot* separate, neither *will* we separate. We have stood the experiment of the election, for the sake of knowing the men

\*Mr. Samuel Howell, though in their ticket, was never considered by us a proprietary dependent.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

who were against us. Alas, what are they? One half of them ought to be now asking public pardon for their former offenses; and the other half may think themselves well off that they are let alone. When the enemy enters the country, can they defend themselves? Or *will* they defend themselves? And if not, are they so foolish as to think that, in times like these, when it is our duty to search the corrupted wound to the bottom, that we, with ten times their strength and number (if the question were put to the people at large) will submit to be governed by cowards and Tories?

He that is wise will reflect, that the safest asylum, especially in times of general convulsion when no settled form of government prevails, is, *the love of the people*. All property is safe under their protection. Even in countries where the lowest and most licentious of them have risen into outrage they have never departed from the path of *natural* honor. Volunteers unto death in defense of the person or fortune of those who had served or defended them, division of property never entered the mind of the populace. It is incompatible with that spirit which impels them into action. An avaricious mob was never heard of; nay, even a miser, pausing in the midst

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of them and catching their spirit, would from that instant cease to be covetous.

I shall conclude this letter with remarking, that the English fleet and army have of late gone upon a different plan of operation to what they first set out with; for instead of going against those colonies where independence prevails *most*, they go against *those only* where they suppose it prevails *least*. They have quitted Massachusetts Bay and gone to North Carolina, supposing they had many friends there.

Why are they expected at New York? But because they imagine the inhabitants are *not* generally independents (yet that province hath a large share of virtue, notwithstanding the odium which its House of Assembly brought upon it). From which I argue that the electing the King's attorney for a burgess of this city, is a fair invitation for them to come here; and in that case, will those who have invited them turn out to repulse them? I suppose not, for in their 923 votes there will not be found more than sixty armed men, perhaps not so many. Wherefore, should such an event happen, which probably will, I here give my *first vote* to levy the expense attending the expedition against them, *on the estates of those who have invited them.*      THE FORESTER.

## A DIALOGUE

**B**ETWEEN the GHOST of GENERAL MONTGOMERY, just arrived from the Elysian Fields; and an American DELEGATE, in a wood near Philadelphia.

*Delegate*—Welcome to this retreat, my good friend. If I mistake not, I now see the ghost of the brave General Montgomery.

*General Montgomery*—I am glad to see you. I still love liberty and America, and the contemplation of the future greatness of this continent now forms a large share of my present happiness. I am here upon an important errand: to warn you against listening to terms of accommodation from the Court of Britain.

*Del.*—I shall be happy in receiving instruction from you in the present trying exigency of our public affairs. But suppose the terms you speak of should be just and honorable?

*Gen. Mont.*—How can you expect these, after the King has proclaimed you rebels from the throne, and after both Houses of Parliament have resolved to support him in carrying on a war against you? No, I see no offers from Great Britain but of PARDON. The very word

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

is an insult upon our cause. To whom is pardon offered?—to virtuous freemen. For what? —for flying to arms in defense of the rights of humanity. And from whom do these offers come?—From a ROYAL CRIMINAL. You have furnished me with a new reason for triumphing in my death, for I had rather have it said that I died by his vengeance, than lived by his mercy.

*Del.*—But you think nothing of the destructive consequences of war. How many cities must be reduced to ashes! how many families must be ruined! and how many widows and orphans must be made, should the present war be continued any longer with Great Britain!

*Gen. Mont.*—I think of nothing but the destructive consequences of slavery. The calamities of war are transitory and confined in their effects. But the calamities of slavery are extensive and lasting in their operation. I love mankind as well as you, and I could never restrain a tear when my love of justice has obliged me to shed the blood of a fellow creature. It is my humanity that makes me urge you against a reconciliation with Great Britain, for if this takes place, nothing can prevent the American colonies from being the seat of war

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

as often as the King of Great Britain renews his quarrels with any of the colonies, or with any of the belligerent powers of Europe.

*Del.*—I tremble at the doctrine you have advanced. I see you are for the independence of the colonies of Great Britain.

*Gen. Mont.*—I am for permanent liberty, peace, and security to the American colonies.

*Del.*—These can only be maintained by placing the colonies in the situation they were in the year 1763.

*Gen. Mont.*—And is no satisfaction to be made to the colonies for the blood and treasure they have expended in resisting the arms of Great Britain? Who can soften the prejudices of the King—the Parliament—and the Nation, each of whom will be averse to maintain a peace with you in proportion to the advantages you have gained over them. Who shall make restitution to the widows—the mothers—and the children of the men who have been slain by their arms? Can no hand wield the scepter of government in America except that which has been stained with the blood of your countrymen? For my part if I thought this continent would ever acknowledge the sovereignty of the Crown of Britain again, I should forever lament the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

day in which I offered up my life for its salvation.

*Del.*—You should distinguish between the King and his ministers.

*Gen. Mont.*—I live in a world where all political superstition is done away. The King is the author of all the measures carried on against America. The influence of bad ministers is no better apology for these measures, than the influences of bad company is for a murderer, who expiates his crimes under a gallows. You all complain of the corruption of the Parliament, and of the venality of the Nation, and yet you forget that the Crown is the source of them both. You shun the streams, and yet you are willing to sit down at the very fountain of corruption and venality.

*Del.*—Our distance and charters will protect us from the influence of the Crown.

*Gen. Mont.*—Your distance will only render your danger more imminent, and your ruin more irretrievable. Charters are no restraints against the lust of power. The only reason why you have escaped so long is, because the treasure of the Nation has been employed for these fifty years in buying up the virtue of Britain and Ireland. Hereafter, the reduction of the repre-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

sentatives of the people of America will be the only aim of administration, should you continue to be connected with them.

*Del.*—But I foresee many evils from the independence of the colonies. Our trade will be ruined from the want of a navy to protect it. Each colony will put in its claim for superiority, and we shall have domestic wars without end.

*Gen. Mont.*—As I now know that Divine Providence intends this country to be the asylum of persecuted virtue from every quarter of the globe, so I think your trade will be the vehicle that will convey it to you. Heaven has furnished you with greater resources for a navy than any nation in the world. Nothing but an ignorance of your strength could have led you to sacrifice your trade for the protection of a foreign navy. A freedom from the restraints of the Acts of Navigation, I foresee, will produce such immense additions to the wealth of this country that posterity will wonder that ever you thought your present trade worth its protection.

As to the supposed contentions between sister colonies, they have no foundation in truth. But supposing they have, will delaying the independence of the colonies fifty years prevent them? No—the weakness of the colonies, which

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

at first produced their union, will always preserve it, 'till it shall be their interest to be separated. Had the Colony of Massachusetts Bay been possessed of the military resources which it would probably have had fifty years hence, would she have held out the signal of distress to her sister colonies, upon the news of the Boston Port Bill! No—she would have withstood all the power of Britain alone, and afterwards the neutral colonies might have shared the fate of the Colony of Canada.

Moreover, had the connection with Great Britain been continued fifty years longer, the progress of British laws, customs and manners (now totally corrupted) would have been such that the colonies would have been prepared to welcome slavery. But had it been otherwise, they must have asserted their independence with arms. This is nearly done already. It will be cruel to bequeath another contest to your posterity.

*Del.*—But I dread all innovations in governments. They are very dangerous things.

*Gen. Mont.*—The Revolution, which gave a temporary stability to the liberties of Britain, was an innovation in government, and yet no ill consequences have arisen from it. Innovations are dangerous only as they shake the prejudices

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of a people; but there are now, I believe, but few prejudices to be found in this country, in favor of the old connection with Great Britain. I except those men only who are under the influence of their passions and offices.

*Del.*—But is it not most natural for us to wish for a connection with a people who speak the same language with us, and possess the same laws, religion, and forms of government with ourselves?

*Gen. Mont.*—The immortal Montesquieu says, that nations should form alliances with those nations only which are as unlike to themselves as possible in religion, laws and manners, if they mean to preserve their own constitutions. Your dependence upon the Crown is no advantage, but rather an injury to the people of Britain, as it increases the power and influence of the King. The people are benefited only by your trade, and this they may have after you are independent of the Crown. Should you be disposed to forgive the King and the Nation for attempting to enslave you, they will never forgive you for having baffled them in the attempt.

*Del.*—But we have many friends in both Houses of Parliament.

*Gen. Mont.*—You mean the Ministry have

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

many enemies in Parliament who connect the cause of America with their clamors at the door of administration. Lord Chatham's conciliatory bill would have ruined you more effectually than Lord North's motion. The Marquis of Rockingham was the author of the declaratory bill. Mr. Wilkes has added infamy to the weakness of your cause, and the Duke of Grafton and Lord Lyttleton have rendered the minority junto, if possible, more contemptible than ever.

*Del.*—But if we become independent we shall become a commonwealth.

*Gen. Mont.*—I maintain that it is your interest to be independent of Great Britain, but I do not recommend any new form of government to you. I should think it strange that a people who have virtue enough to defend themselves against the most powerful nation in the world should want wisdom to contrive a perfect and free form of government. You have been kept in subjection to the Crown of Britain by a miracle. Your liberties have hitherto been suspended by a thread. Your connection with Great Britain is unnatural and unnecessary. All the wheels of a government should move within itself. I would only beg leave to observe

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

to you, that monarchy and aristocracy have in all ages been the vehicles of slavery.

*Del.*—Our governments will want force and authority if we become independent of Great Britain.

*Gen. Mont.*—I beg leave to contradict that assertion. No royal edicts or acts of assembly have ever been more faithfully or universally obeyed than the resolves of the Congress. I admire the virtue of the colonies, and did not some of them still hang upon the haggard breasts of Great Britain, I should think the time now come in which they had virtue enough to be happy under any form of government. Remember that it is in a commonwealth only that you can expect to find every man a patriot or a hero. Aristides, Epaminondas, Pericles, Scipio, Camillus, and a thousand other illustrious Grecian and Roman heroes, would never have astonished the world with their names, had they lived under royal governments.

*Del.*—Will not a declaration of independence lessen the number of our friends, and increase the rage of our enemies in Britain?

*Gen. Mont.*—Your friends (as you call them) are too few—too divided—and too interested to help you. And as for your enemies,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

they have done their worst. They have called upon Russians—Hanoverians—Hessians—Canadians—savages and negroes to assist them in burning your towns—desolating your country—and in butchering your wives and children. You have nothing further to fear from them. Go, then, and awaken the Congress to a sense of their importance; you have no time to lose.

France waits for nothing but a declaration of your independence, to revenge the injuries they sustained from Britain in the last war. But I forbear to reason any further with you. The decree is finally gone forth. Britain and America are now distinct empires. Your country teems with patriots—heroes—and legislators, who are impatient to burst forth into light and importance. Hereafter, your achievements shall no more swell the page of British history. God did not excite the attention of all Europe—of the whole world—nay of angels themselves to the present controversy for nothing.

The inhabitants of heaven long to see the ark finished, in which all the liberty and true religion of the world are to be deposited. The day on which the colonies declare their independence will be a tribute to Hampden—Sydney—Russell—Warren—Gardiner and Macpherson—Cheese-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

man, and all the other heroes who have offered themselves as sacrifices upon the altar of liberty.

It was no small mortification to me when I fell upon the Plains of Abraham, to reflect that I did not expire like the brave General Wolfe, in the arms of victory. But I now no longer envy him his glory. I would rather die in *attempting* to obtain permanent freedom for a handful of people, than survive a conquest which would serve only to extend the empire of despotism. A band of heroes now beckon to me. I can only add that America is the theater where human nature will *soon* receive its greatest military, civil, and literary honors.

## RETREAT ACROSS THE DELAWARE\*

**F**ORT WASHINGTON being obliged to surrender, by a violent attack made by the whole British Army, on Saturday, the sixteenth of November, the generals determined to evacuate Fort Lee, which being principally intended to preserve the communication with Fort Washington, was become in a manner useless. The stores were ordered to be removed and great part of them was immediately sent off. The enemy knowing the divided state of our army, and that the terms of the soldiers' enlistments would soon expire, conceived the design of penetrating into the Jerseys, and hoped, by pushing their successes, to be completely victorious.

Accordingly, on Wednesday morning, the twentieth of November, it was discovered that a large body of British and Hessian troops had crossed the North River, and landed about six miles above the fort. As our force was inferior to that of the enemy, the fort unfinished, and on a narrow neck of land, the garrison was ordered to march for Hackensack bridge, which, tho' much nearer the enemy than the fort, they

\* From the *Pennsylvania Journal*, Jan. 29, 1777.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

quietly suffered our troops to take possession of. The principal loss suffered at Fort Lee was that of the heavy cannon, the greatest part of which was left behind.

Our troops continued at Hackensack bridge and town that day and half of the next, when the inclemency of the weather, the want of quarters, and approach of the enemy, obliged them to proceed to Aquaconack, and from thence to Newark; a party being left at Aquaconack to observe the motions of the enemy. At Newark our little army was reinforced by Lord Sterling's and Colonel Hand's brigades, which had been stationed at Brunswick.

Three days after our troops left Hackensack, a body of the enemy crossed the Passaic above Aquaconack, made their approaches slowly toward Newark, and seemed extremely desirous that we should leave the town without their being put to the trouble of fighting for it. The distance from Newark to Aquaconack is nine miles, and they were three days in marching that distance. From Newark our retreat was to Brunswick, and it was hoped the assistance of the Jersey militia would enable General Washington to make the banks of the Raritan the bounds of the enemy's progress; but on the first of De-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

cember the army was greatly weakened, by the expiration of the terms of the enlistments of the Maryland and Jersey Flying Camp; and the militia not coming in so soon as was expected, another retreat was the necessary consequence. Our army reached Trenton on the fourth of December, continued there till the seventh, and then, on the approach of the enemy, it was thought proper to pass the Delaware.

This retreat was censured by some as pusillanimous and disgraceful; but, did they know that our army was at one time less than a thousand effective men, and never more than 4,000—that the number of the enemy was at least 8,000, exclusive of their artillery and light-horse—that this handful of Americans retreated *slowly* above eighty miles without losing a dozen men—and that suffering themselves to be forced to an action, would have been their entire destruction—did they know this, they would never have censured it at all—they would have called it prudent—posterity will call it glorious—and the names of Washington and Fabius will run parallel to eternity.

The enemy, intoxicated with success, resolved to enjoy the fruits of their conquest. Fearless of an attack from this side of the river, they can-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

toned in parties at a distance from each other, and spread misery and desolation wherever they went. Their rage and lust, their avarice and cruelty, knew no bounds; and murder, ravishment, plunder, and the most brutal treatment of every sex and age, were the first acts that signalized their conquest. And if such were their outrages on the partial subjection of a few villages —good God! what consummate wretchedness is in store for that state over which their power shall be fully established.

While the enemy were in this situation, their security was increased by the captivity of General Lee, who was unfortunately taken in the rear of his army, December thirteenth, at Baskingridge by a party of light-horse, commanded by Colonel Harcourt. The fortune of our arms was now at its lowest ebb—but the tide was beginning to turn—the militia of this city [Philadelphia] had joined General Washington—the junction of the two armies was soon after effected—and the back countries of this state, aroused by the distresses of America, poured out their yeomanry to the assistance of the Continental Army. General Washington began now to have a respectable force, and resolved not to be idle. On the twenty-sixth of December he crossed the Dela-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ware, surprised three regiments of Hessians, and with little or no loss, took near a thousand prisoners.

Soon after this maneuver, and while the enemy were collecting their scattered troops at Princeton and Brunswick, General Washington crossed the Delaware with all his army. On the second of January the enemy began to advance toward Trenton, which they entered in the afternoon, and there being nothing but a small creek between the two armies, a general engagement was expected next day. This it was manifestly our advantage to avoid; and by a master stroke of generalship, General Washington frees himself from his disagreeable situation, and surprises a party of the enemy in Princeton, which obliges their main body to return to Brunswick.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in cooperation with the  
University of Michigan

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ware, surprised three regiments of Hessians, and with little or no loss, took near a thousand prisoners.

Soon after this maneuver, and while the enemy were collecting their scattered troops at Princeton and Brunswick, General Washington crossed the Delaware with all his army. On the second of January the enemy began to advance toward Trenton, which they entered in the afternoon, and there being nothing but a small creek between the two armies, a general engagement was expected next day. <sup>Photogravure from the Original Painting in the State House, Boston</sup> **(BENJAMIN FRANKLIN)** it was manifestly our advantage to avoid; and by a master stroke of generalship, General Washington frees himself from his disagreeable situation, and surprises a party of the enemy in Princeton, which obliges their main body to return to Brunswick.





## LETTER TO FRANKLIN, IN PARIS

York Town, Pa, May 16, 1778.

YOUR favor of October seventh did not come to me till March. I was at camp when Captain Folger arrived with the blank packet. The private letters were, I believe, all safe. Mr. [President] Laurens forwarded yours to York Town where I afterwards received it.

The last winter has been rather barren of military events, but for your amusement I send you a little history how I have passed away part of the time.

The eleventh of September last I was preparing despatches for you when the report of cannon at Brandywine interrupted my proceeding. The event of that day you have doubtless been informed of, which, excepting the enemy keeping the ground, may be deemed a drawn battle. General Washington collected his army at Chester, and the enemy's not moving toward him next day must be attributed to the disability they sustained and the burden of their wounded.

On the sixteenth of the same month the two armies were drawn up in order of battle near White Horse on the Lancaster road, when a most

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

violent and incessant storm of rain prevented an action. Our army sustained a heavy loss in their ammunition, the cartouche boxes, especially as they were not of the most seasoned leather, being no proof against the almost incredible fury of the weather, which obliged General Washington to draw his army up into the country until those injuries could be repaired, and a new supply of ammunition procured. The enemy in the mean time kept on the west side of the Schuylkill. On Friday, the nineteenth, about one in the morning the first alarm of their crossing was given, and the confusion, as you may suppose, was very great.

It was a beautiful, still, moonlight morning and the streets as full of men, women and children as on a market day. On the evening before I was fully persuaded that unless something was done the city [Philadelphia] would be lost; and under that anxiety I went to Colonel Bayard, Speaker of the House of Assembly, and represented, as I very particularly knew it, the situation we were in, and the probability of saving the city if proper efforts were made for that purpose.

I reasoned thus—General Washington was about thirty miles up the Schuylkill with an army

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

properly collected waiting for ammunition, besides which a reinforcement of 1500 men were marching from the North River to join him; and if only an appearance of defense be made in the city by throwing up works at the heads of the streets, it would make the enemy very suspicious how they threw themselves between the city and General Washington, and between two rivers, which must have been the case; for notwithstanding the knowledge which military gentlemen are supposed to have, I observe they move exceedingly cautiously on new ground, are exceedingly suspicious of villages and towns, and more perplexed at seemingly little things which they cannot clearly understand than at great ones which they are fully acquainted with. And I think it very probable that General Howe would have mistaken our necessity for a deep laid scheme and not have ventured himself in the middle of it.

But admitting that he had, he must either have brought his whole army down, or a part of it. If the whole, General Washington would have followed him, perhaps the same day, in two or three days at most, and our assistance in the city would have been material. If only a part of it, we should have been a match for them and General Washington superior to those which remained

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

above. The chief thing was, whether the citizens would turn out to defend the city.

My proposal to Colonels Bayard and Bradford was to call them together the next morning, make them fully acquainted with the situation and the means and prospect of preserving themselves, and that the city had better voluntarily assess itself \$50,000 for its defense than suffer an enemy to come into it. Colonels Bayard and Bradford were in my opinion, and as General Mifflin was then in town, I next went to him, acquainted him with our design, and mentioned likewise that if two or three thousand men could be mustered up whether we might depend on him to command them, for without some one to lead, nothing could be done.

He declined that part, not being then very well, but promised what assistance he could. A few hours after this the alarm happened. I went directly to General Mifflin but he had set off and nothing was done. I cannot help being of opinion that the city might have been saved, but perhaps it is better otherwise.

I stayed in the city till Sunday [September twenty-first], having sent my chest and everything belonging to the foreign committee to Trenton in a shallop. The enemy did not cross

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

the river till the Wednesday following. Hearing on the Sunday that General Washington had moved to Sunderford I set off for that place, but learning on the road that it was a mistake and that he was six or seven miles above that place, I crossed over to Southfield, and the next morning to Trenton, to see after my chest.

On the Wednesday morning I intended returning to Philadelphia, but was informed at Bristol of the enemy's crossing the Schuylkill. At this place I met Colonel Kirkbride of Pennsburg Manor, who invited me home with him. On Friday, the twenty-sixth, a party of the enemy, about 1500, took possession of the city, and the same day an account arrived that Colonel Brown had taken 300 of the enemy at the old French lines at Ticonderoga, and destroyed all their water craft, being about 200 boats of different kinds.

On the twenty-ninth of September I set off for camp without well knowing where to find it, every day occasioning some movement. I kept pretty high up the country, and being unwilling to ask questions, not knowing what company I might be in, I was there three days before I fell in with it. The army had moved about three miles lower down that morning. The next day

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

they made a movement about the same distance, to the twenty-first milestone on the Skippach road—headquarters at John Wince's.

On the third of October in the morning they began to fortify the camp, as a deception; and about nine at night marched for Germantown. The number of Continental troops was between 8000 and 9000, besides militia, the rest remaining as guards for the security of camp. General Greene, whose quarters I was at, desired me to remain there till morning. The skirmishing with the pickets began soon after. I met no person for several miles riding, which I concluded to be a good sign; after this I met a man on horseback who told me he was going to hasten on a supply of ammunition, that the enemy were broken and retreating fast, which was true. I saw several country people with arms in their hands running across a field toward Germantown, within about five or six miles, at which I met several of the wounded on wagons, horseback, or on foot. I passed General Nash on a litter made of poles, but did not know him. I felt unwilling to ask questions lest the information should not be agreeable, and kept on.

About two miles after this I passed a promiscuous crowd of wounded and otherwise who

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

were halted at a house to refresh. Colonel Bid-dle D. Q. M. G. was among them, who called after me, that if I went farther on that road I should be taken, for that the firing which I heard was the enemy's. I never could, and cannot now learn, and I believe no man can inform truly the cause of that day's miscarriage.

The retreat was as extraordinary. Nobody hurried themselves. Everyone marched his own pace. The enemy kept a civil distance behind, sending every now and then a shot after us, and receiving the same from us. That part of the army which I was with collected and formed on the hill on the side of the road near White Marsh Church; the enemy came within three quarters of a mile and halted. The orders on retreat were to assemble that night on the back of Perkioming Creek, about seven miles above the camp, which had orders to move.

The army had marched the preceding night fourteen miles, and having full twenty to march back were exceedingly fatigued. They appeared to me to be only sensible of a disappointment, not a defeat, and to be more displeased at their retreating from Germantown, than anxious to get to their rendezvous. I was so lucky that night to get a little house about four miles wide of Perkio-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ming, toward which place in the morning I heard a considerable firing, which distressed me exceedingly, knowing that our army was much harassed and not collected. However, I soon relieved myself by going to see. They were discharging their pieces, which, though necessary, prevented several parties going till next day.

I breakfasted next morning at General Washington's quarters, who was at the same loss with every other to account for the accidents of the day. I remember his expressing his surprise, by saying, that at the time he supposed everything secure, and was about giving orders for the army to proceed down to Philadelphia; that he most unexpectedly saw a part (I think of the artillery) hastily retreating. This partial retreat was, I believe, misunderstood, and soon followed by others.

The fog was frequently thick, the troops young and unused to breaking and rallying, and our men rendered suspicious to each other, many of them being in red. A new army once disordered is difficult to manage, the attempt dangerous. To this may be added a prudence in not putting matters to too hazardous a trial the first time. Men must be taught *regular* fighting by practise and degrees, and tho' the expedition

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

failed, it had this good effect—that they seemed to feel themselves more important *after* it than *before*, as it was the first general attack they had ever made.

I have not related the affair at Mr. Chew's house, Germantown, as I was not there, but have seen it since. It certainly afforded the enemy time to rally—yet the matter was difficult. To have pressed on and left 500 men in the rear, might by a change of circumstances been ruinous. To attack them was a loss of time, as the house is a strong stone building, proof against any twelve pounder. General Washington sent a flag, thinking it would procure their surrender and expedite his march to Philadelphia; it was refused, and circumstances changed almost directly after.

I stayed in camp two days after the Germantown action, and lest any ill impression should get among the garrisons at Mud Island and Red Bank, and the vessels and galleys stationed there, I crossed over to the Jerseys at Trenton and went down to those places. I laid the first night on board the *Champion*, Continental galley, who was stationed off the mouth of the Schuylkill.

The enemy threw up a two gun battery on the point of the river's mouth opposite the pest

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

house. The next morning was a thick fog, and as soon as it cleared away, and we became visible to each other, they opened on the galley, who returned the fire. The commodore made a signal to bring the galley under the Jersey shore, as she was not a match for the battery, nor the battery a sufficient object for the galley. One shot went thro' the fore sail, which was all. At noon I went with Colonel [Christopher] Greene, who commanded at Red Bank [fort,] over to Fort Mifflin [Mud Island].

The enemy opened that day two two-gun batteries, and a mortar battery, on the fort. They threw about thirty shells into it that afternoon, without doing any damage; the ground being damp and spongy, not above five or six burst; not a man was killed or wounded. I came away in the evening, laid on board the galley, and the next day came to Colonel Kirkbride's [Bordentown, N.J.]; stayed a few days and came again into camp. An expedition was on foot the evening I got there in which I went as aide de camp to General [Nathanael] Greene, having a volunteer commission for that purpose. The occasion was —a party of the enemy, about 1500, lay over the Schuylkill at Grey's Ferry. General McDougall with his division was sent to attack them; and

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Sullivan and Greene with their divisions were to favor the enterprise by a feint on the city, down the Germantown road. They set off about nine at night, and halted at daybreak, between Germantown and the city, the advanced party at Three Miles Run.

As I knew the ground I went with two light horse to discover the enemy's picket, but the dress of the light-horse being white made them, I thought, too visible, as it was then twilight; on which I left them with my horse, and went on foot, till I distinctly saw the picket at Mr. Dickerson's place—which is the nearest I have been to Philadelphia since September, except once at Cooper's Ferry, as I went to the forts. General Sullivan was at Dr. Redman's house, and McDougall's beginning the attack was to be the signal for moving down to the city. But the enemy either on the approach of McDougall, or on information of it, called in their party, and the expedition was frustrated.

A cannonade, by far the most furious I ever heard, began down the river, soon after daylight, the first gun of which we supposed to be the signal; but was soon undeceived, there being no small arms. After waiting two hours beyond the time, we marched back; the cannon was then

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

less frequent, but on the road between Germantown and White Marsh we were stunned with a report as loud as a peal from a hundred cannon at once; and turning around I saw thick smoke rising like a pillar, and spreading from the top like a tree. This was the blowing up of the *Augusta*. I did not hear the explosion of the *Berlin*.

After this I returned to Colonel Kirkbride's, where I stayed about a fortnight, and set off again to camp. The day after I got there Generals Greene, Wayne, and Cadwallader, with a party of light-horse, were ordered on a reconnoitering party toward the forts. We were out four days and nights without meeting with anything material. An East Indiaman, whom the enemy had cut down so as to draw but little water, came up, without guns, while we were on foot on Carpenter's Island, going to Province Island. Her guns were brought up in the evening in a flat, she got in the rear of the fort, where few or no guns could bear upon her, and the next morning played on it incessantly. The night following the fort was evacuated.

The obstruction the enemy met with from those forts, and the *chevaux-de-frise*, was extraordinary, and had it not been that the west-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ern channel, deepened by the current, being somewhat obstructed by the *chevaux-de-frise* in the main river, which enabled them to bring up the light Indiaman battery, it is a doubt whether they would have succeeded at last. By that assistance they reduced the fort, and got sufficient command of the river to move some of the late sunk *chevaux-de-frise*. Soon after this the fort on Red Bank (which had bravely repulsed the enemy a little time before) was evacuated, the galleys ordered up to Bristol and the captains of such other armed vessels as *thought* they could not pass on the eastward side of Wind Mill Island, very precipitately set them on fire. As I judged from this event that the enemy would winter in Philadelphia, I began to think of preparing for York Town, which however I was willing to delay, hoping that the ice would afford opportunity for new maneuvers. But the season passed very barrenly away.

I stayed at Colonel Kirkbride's till the latter end of January. Commodore Haslewood, who commanded the remainder of the fleet at Trenton, acquainted me with a scheme of his for burning the enemy's shipping, which was by sending a charged boat across the river from Cooper's Ferry, by means of a rocket fixed in its stern.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Considering the width of the river, the tide, and the variety of accidents that might change its direction, I thought the project trifling and insufficient; and proposed to him, that if he would get a boat properly charged, and take a batteau in tow, sufficient to bring three or four persons off, that I would make one with him and two other persons that might be relied on to go down on that business. One of the company, Captain Blewer of Philadelphia, seconded the proposal, but the Commodore, and, what I was more surprised at, Colonel Bradford declined it.

The burning of part of the Delaware fleet, the precipitate retreat of the rest, the little service rendered by them and the great expense they were at, make the only national blot in the proceedings of the last campaign. I felt a strong anxiety for them to recover their credit, which, among others, was one motive for my proposal. After this I came to camp and from thence to York Town, and published the "Crisis" No. 5, to General Howe. I have begun No. 6, which I intend to address to Lord North.

I was not at camp when General Howe marched out on the twentieth of December toward White Marsh. It was a most contemptible affair, the threatenings and seeming fury he

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

set out with, and haste and terror the army retreated with, make it laughable. I have seen several persons from Philadelphia who assure me that their coming back was a mere uproar, and plainly indicated their apprehensions of a pursuit. General Howe, in his letter to Lord Go. Germain, dated December thirteenth, represented General Washington's camp as a strongly fortified place. There was not, Sir, a work thrown up in it till General Howe marched out, and then only here and there a breastwork. It was a temporary station. Besides which, our men begin to think works in the field of little use.

General Washington keeps his station at the Valley forge. I was there when the army first began to build huts; they appeared to me like a family of beavers; everyone busy; some carrying logs, others mud, and the rest fastening them together. The whole was raised in a few days, and is a curious collection of buildings in the true rustic order.

As to politics, I think we are now safely landed. The apprehension which Britain must be under from her neighbors must effectually prevent her sending reinforcements, could she procure them. She dare not, I think, in the *pres-*

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*ent* situation of affairs, trust her troops so far from home.

No commissioners are yet arrived. I think fighting is nearly over, for Britain, mad, wicked, and foolish, has done her utmost. The only part for her now to act is frugality, and the only way for her to get out of debt is to lessen her Government expenses. Two millions a year is a sufficient allowance, and as much as she ought to expend exclusive of the interest of her debt. The affairs of England are approaching either to ruin or redemption. If the latter, she may bless the resistance of America.

For my own part, I thought it very hard to have the country set on fire about my ears almost the moment I got into it; and among other pleasures I feel in having uniformly done my duty, I feel that of not having discredited your friendship and patronage.

I live in hopes of seeing and advising with you respecting the history of the American Revolution, as soon as a turn of affairs makes it safe to take a passage for Europe. Please to accept my thanks for the pamphlets, which Mr. Temple Franklin tells me he has sent. They are not yet come to hand. Mr. and Mrs. Bache are at Manheim, near Lancaster; I heard they were well a

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

few days ago. I laid two nights at Mr. Duffield's, in the winter. Miss Nancy Clifton was there, who said the enemy had destroyed or sold a great part of your furniture. Mr. Duffield has since been taken by them and carried into the city, but is now at his own house. I just hear they have burned Colonel Kirkbride's, Mr. Borden's, and some other houses at Borden Town. Governor Johnstone (House of Commons) has written to Mr. Robert Morris informing him of commissioners coming from England. The letter is printed in the newspapers without signature, and is dated February fifth, by which you will know it.

Please, Sir, to accept this, rough and incorrect as it is, as I have [not] time to copy it fair, which was my design when I began it; besides which, paper is most exceedingly scarce.

I am, Dear Sir, your obliged and affectionate  
humble servant,

T. PAINE.

The Honorable Benj. Franklin, Esq.

## THE AFFAIR OF SILAS DEANE\*

TO SILAS DEANE, ESQUIRE

AFTER reading a few lines of your address to the public in the *Pennsylvania Packet* of December sixth, I can truly say, that concern got the better of curiosity, and I felt an unwillingness to go through it. Mr. Deane must very well know that I have no interest in, so likewise am I no stranger to, his negotiations and contracts in France, his difference with his colleagues, the reason of his return to America, and the matters which have occurred since. All these are to me familiar things; and while I can but be surprised at the conduct of Mr. Deane, I lament the unnecessary torture he has imprudently occasioned. That disagreements will arise between individuals, even to the perplexity of a state, is nothing new, but that they should be outrageously brought forward, by one whose station abroad should have taught him a delicacy of manners and even an excess of prudence, is something strange.

The mind of a *living* public is quickly alarmed and easily tormented. It not only suffers by the

\* From the *Pennsylvania Packet*, December 15, 1778.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

stroke, but is frequently fretted by the cure, and ought therefore to be tenderly dealt with, and *never ought to be trifled with.* It feels first and reasons afterwards. Its jealousy keeps vibrating between the accused and the accuser, and on a failure of proof always fixes on the latter. Had Mr. Deane's address produced no uneasiness in the body he appeals to, it would have been a sign, not of tranquillity, but death: and though it is painful to see it unnecessarily tortured, it is pleasant to contemplate the living cause. Mr. Deane is particularly circumstanced.

He has advantages which seldom happen, and when they do happen, ought to be used with the nicest care and strictest honor. He has the opportunity of telling his own tale and there is none to reply to him. Two of the gentlemen he so freely censures are three thousand miles off, and the other two he so freely affronts are members of Congress; one of them likewise, Colonel R. H. Lee, is absent in Virginia; and however painful may be their feelings, they must attend the progressive conduct of the House.

No member in Congress can individually take up the matter without becoming inconsistent, and none of the public understands it sufficiently. With these advantages Mr. Deane

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

ought to be nicely and strictly the gentleman, in his language, his assertions, his insinuations and his facts. He presents himself, as his own evidence, upon his honor, and any misrepresentation or disingenuous trifling in him will be fatal.

Mr. Deane begins his address with a general display of his services in France, and strong *insinuations* against the Honorable Arthur and William Lee; he brings his complaints down to the time of signing the treaty, and from thence to the fourth of March, when he received the following order of Congress which he inserts at large:

In Congress, December 8, 1777. Whereas it is of the greatest importance that Congress should at this critical juncture be well informed of the state of affairs in Europe. And whereas Congress have resolved that the Honorable Silas Deane, Esq., be recalled from the Court of France, and have appointed another commissioner to supply his place there. Ordered, that the committee for foreign correspondence, write to the Honorable Silas Deane, and direct him to embrace the first opportunity of returning to America, and upon his arrival to repair with all possible dispatch to Congress. Mr. Deane then says “and having placed *my papers* and *yours* in *safety*, I left Paris the thirtieth to embark for my native country, on board that fleet which your great and generous ally sent out for your assistance, in *full confidence* that I should not be detained on the *business I was sent for*.”

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

I am obliged to tell Mr. Deane that this arrangement is somewhat uncandid, for on the reading it, it creates an opinion and likewise carries an appearance that Mr. Deane was only *sent* for, as the necessary and proper person from whom Congress might obtain a history of their affairs, and learn the character of their foreign agents, commissioners and ambassadors, after which Mr. Deane was to return. Is Mr. Deane so little master of address as not to know that censure may be politely conveyed by an apology? For however Mr. Deane may choose to represent or misrepresent the matter, the truth is that *his* contracts and engagements in France, had so involved and embarrassed Congress, that they found it necessary and resolved to *recall* him, that is *ordered him home*, to give an account of his *own* conduct, and likewise to save him from a train of disagreeable consequences, which must have arisen to him had he continued in France.

I would not be supposed to insinuate, that he might be thought *unsafe*, but *unfit*. There is a certain and necessary association of dignity between the person and the employment which perhaps did not appear when Mr. Deane was considered the ambassador. His address to the public confirms the justness of this remark. The

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

spirit and language of it differ exceedingly from that cool, penetrating judgment and refinement of manners and expression which fits, and is absolutely necessary in, the plenipotentiary. His censures are coarse and vehement, and when he speaks of himself, he begs, nay almost weeps to be believed. It was the intricacy of Mr. Deane's *own official* affairs, his multiplied contracts in France before the arrival of Dr. Franklin or any of the other commissioners; his assuming authorities, and entering into engagements, in the time of his commercial agency, for which he had neither commission nor instruction, and the general unsettled state of his accounts, that were among the reasons that produced the motion for recalling and superseding him. Why then does Mr. Deane endeavor to lead the attention of the public to a wrong object, and bury the real reasons, under a tumult of new and perhaps unnecessary suspicions?

Mr. Deane in the beginning of his address to the public says, "What I *write* to you, I would have *said* to your representatives; *their ears have been shut against me*, by an attention to matters, which my respect for them induces me to believe were of '*more importance.*'"

In this paragraph Mr. Deane's excuse be-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

comes his accuser, and his justification is his offense; for if the greater importance of other matters is supposed and given by himself as a reason, why he was not heard it is likewise a sufficient reason why he ought not to have complained that "*their ears were shut,*" and a good reason why he ought to have waited a more convenient time. But besides the inconsistency of this charge, there is something in it that will suffer by an inquiry, and I am sorry that Mr. Deane's imprudence has obliged me to mention a circumstance which affects his honor as a gentleman, his reputation as a man.

In order to be clearly understood on this head, I am obliged to go back with Mr. Deane to the time of his quitting France on account of his being recalled. "I left Paris," says Mr. Deane, "on the thirtieth of March, 1778, to embark for my native country, having placed '*my papers and yours in safety.*'" Would anybody have supposed that a gentleman in the character of a commercial agent, and afterwards in that of a public minister, would return home after seeing himself both recalled and superseded, and not bring with him his papers and vouchers? And why he has done so must appear to everyone exceedingly unaccountable. After Mr. Deane's arrival he

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

had *two audiences* with Congress in August last, in neither of which did he offer the least charge against the gentlemen he has so loudly upbraided in his address to the public: neither has he yet accounted for his expenditure of public money, which, as it might have been done by a written state of accounts, might for that reason have been done at any time, and was a part of the business which required an audience.

There is something curiously intricate and evasive in Mr. Deane's saying in his address, that he left France "*in full confidence* that he should not be detained on the *business he was sent for.*" And the only end it can answer to him is to furnish out a present excuse for not producing his papers. Mr. Deane had no right, either from the literal or implied sense of the resolution itself, to suppose that he should return to France in his former public character, or that he was "*sent for,*" as he styles it, on any other personal business than that which related to himself. Mr. Deane must be sensible, if he will but candidly reflect, that as an agent only, he greatly exceeded his line, and embarrassed the Congress, the continent, the army and himself.

Mr. Deane's address to the public is dated "November"—but without any day of the month;

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

and here a new scene of ungenteel evasion opens. On the last day of that month, viz. the thirtieth, he addressed a letter to Congress signifying his intentions of returning to France, and pressing to have his affairs brought to some conclusion, which, I presume, on account of the absence of his papers could not well be done; therefore Mr. Deane's address to the public must be written before the thirtieth, and consequently before his letter to Congress, which carries an appearance of its being only a feint in order to make a confused diversion in his favor at the time his affairs should come under consideration.

What favors this opinion, is that on the next day, that is December first, and partly in consequence of Mr. Deane's letter to them of the thirtieth, the Congress entered the following resolution.

In Congress, December 1, 1778.—*Resolved*, That after to-morrow Congress will meet two hours at least each evening, beginning at six o'clock, Saturday evening excepted, until the present state of their foreign affairs be fully considered.

As an inquiry into the state of foreign affairs naturally and effectually included all and every part of Mr. Deane's, he was thereupon regularly notified by letter to attend; and on the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

*fourth* he wrote again to Congress, acquainting them with his having received that notification and expressed his thanks; yet on the day following, viz. the *fifth*, he published his extraordinary address in the newspapers, which, on account of its unsupported matter, the fury of its language and temper, and its inconsistency with other parts of his conduct, is incompatible with that character (which on account of the station he had been honored with, and the sense that should have impressed him in consequence thereof) he ought to have maintained.

On the appearance of Mr. Deane's address of the fifth, the public became jealously uneasy, and well they might. They were unacquainted with the train of circumstances that preceded and attended it, and were naturally led to suppose, that Mr. Deane, on account of the station he had filled, must be too much of a gentleman to deceive them. It was Mr. Deane's particular fortune to grow into consequence from accident. Sent to France as a commercial agent under the appointment of a committee, he rose as a matter of convenience to the station of a commissioner of Congress; and with what dignity he might fill out that character, the public will judge from his

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

conduct since; and perhaps be led to substitute convenience as an excuse for the appointment.

A delicacy of difficulties likewise arose in Congress on the appearance of the said address; for setting aside the matter, the irregular manner of it, as a proceeding, was a breach of decency; and as Mr. Deane after being notified to attend an inquiry into foreign affairs, had circumstantially withdrawn from that mode, by appealing to the public, and at the same time said "*their ears were shut against him,*" it was therefore given as a reason by some, that to take any notice of Mr. Deane in the interim would look like suppressing his public information, if he had any to give; and consequently would imply dishonor on the House,—and that as he had transferred his case to the public, before it had been rejected by the Congress, he ought therefore to be left with the public, till he had done with them and they with him; and that whether his information was true or not, it was an insult on the people, because it was making them the ladder, on which he insulted their representatives, by an unjust complaint of neglect.

Others who might anticipate the anxiety of the public, and apprehend discontents would arise from a supposed inattention, were for

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

adopting measures to prevent them, and of consequence inclined to a different line of conduct, and this division of sentiment on what might be supposed the honor of the House, occasioned the then *President*, Henry Laurens, Esq., who adhered to the former opinion, to resign the chair. The majority on the sentiments was a single vote. In this place I take the liberty of remarking, for the benefit of succeeding generations, that the Honorable President before mentioned, having filled that station for one year in October last, made his resignation of the presidency at the expiration of the year, lest any example taken from his continuance might have become inconvenient. I have an additional satisfaction in mentioning this useful historical anecdote, because it is done wholly unknown to the gentleman to whom it relates, or to any other gentleman in or out of Congress. He was replaced by a unanimous vote. But to return to my narration—

In the *Pennsylvania Packet* of December eighth, Francis Lightfoot Lee, Esq., brother to the gentleman so rudely treated in Mr. Deane's publication, and the only one now present, put in a short address to the public, requesting a suspension of their judgment till the matter could be

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

fully investigated by those whose immediate business it became: meaning Congress. And Mr. Deane in the paper of the tenth published another note, in which he informs, "that the Honorable Congress did, on Saturday morning the fifth instant, assign Monday evening to hear him." But why does Mr. Deane conceal the resolution of Congress of December first, in consequence of which he was notified to attend regularly an inquiry into the state of foreign affairs? By so doing, he endeavors to lead the public into a belief that his being heard on Monday was extorted purely in consequence of his address of the fifth, and that otherwise he should not have been heard at all.

I presume Congress are anxious to hear him, and to have his accounts arranged and settled; and if this should be the case, why did Mr. Deane leave his papers in France, and now complain that his affairs are not concluded? In the same note Mr. Deane likewise says, "that Congress did on that evening, Monday, resolve, that Mr. Deane do report in writing, as soon as may be, his agency of their affairs in Europe, together with any intelligence respecting their foreign affairs which he may judge proper." But why does Mr. Deane omit giving the remaining part of the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

resolution, which says, “That Mr. Deane be informed, that if he has anything to communicate to Congress in the interim, of *immediate importance*, that he should be heard tomorrow evening.”

I can see no propriety, in omitting this part, unless Mr. Deane concluded that by publishing it he might put a quick expiration to his credit, by his not being able to give the wondrous information he had threatened in his address. In the conclusion of this note, Mr. Deane likewise says, “I therefore conceive that I cannot, with propriety, continue my narrative at present. In the mean time I submit it to the good sense of the public, whether I ought to take any notice of a publication signed Francis Lightfoot Lee, opposed to *stubborn and undeniable facts*.”

Thus far I have compared Mr. Deane with himself, and whether he has been candid or uncandid, consistent or inconsistent, I leave to the judgment of those who read it. Mr. Deane cannot have the least right to think that I am moved by any party difference or personal antipathy. He is a gentleman with whom I never had a syllable of dispute, nor with any other person upon his account. Who are his friends, his connections, or his foes, is wholly indifferent to me,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

and what I have written will be a secret to everybody till it comes from the press. The convulsion which the public were thrown into by his address will, I hope, justify my taking up a matter in which I should otherwise have been perfectly silent; and whatever may be its fate, my intention is a good one; besides which there was no other person who knew the affair sufficiently, or knowing it, could confidently do it, and yet it was necessary to be done.

I shall now take a short review of what Mr. Deane calls "*stubborn and undeniable facts.*" Mr. Deane must be exceedingly unconversant both with terms and ideas, not to distinguish even between a wandering probability and a fact; and between a forced inclination and a proof; for admitting every circumstance of information in Mr. Deane's address to be true, they are still but circumstances, and his deductions from them are hypothetical and inconclusive.

Mr. Deane has involved a gentleman in his unlimited censure, whose fidelity and personal qualities I have been well acquainted with for three years past; and in respect to an absent injured friend, Colonel Richard Henry Lee, I will venture to tell Mr. Deane, that in any style of character in which a gentleman may be spoken

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of, Mr. Deane would suffer by a comparison. He has one defect which perhaps Mr. Deane is acquainted with, the misfortune of having but one hand.

The charges likewise which he advances against the Honorable Arthur and William Lee, are to me, circumstantial evidences of Mr. Deane's unfitness for a public character; for it is the business of a foreign minister to learn other men's secrets and keep [his] own. Mr. Deane has given a short history of Mr. Arthur Lee and Dr. Berkenhout in France, and he has brought the last mentioned person again on the stage in America. There is something in this so exceedingly weak, that I am surprised that anyone who would be thought a man of sense, should risk his reputation upon such a frivolous tale; for the event of the story, if any can be produced from it, is greatly against himself.

He says that a correspondence took place in France between Dr. Berkenhout and Mr. [Arthur] Lee; that Mr. Lee showed part of the correspondence to Dr. Franklin and himself, and that in order to give the greater weight to Dr. Berkenhout's remarks he gave them to understand, that Dr. Berkenhout was in the secrets of the British Ministry. What Mr. Deane has re-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

lated this for, or what he means to infer from it, I cannot understand; for the political inference ought to be, that if Mr. Lee really thought that Dr. Berkenhout was in the secrets of the British Ministry, he was therefore the very person with whom Mr. Lee ought, as an ambassador, to cultivate a correspondence, and introduce to his colleagues, in order to discover what those secrets were, that they might be transmitted to America; and if Mr. Deane acted otherwise, he unwisely mistook his own character.

However, this I can assure Mr. Deane, upon my own knowledge, that more and better information has come from Mr. Lee than ever came from himself; and how or where he got it, is not a subject fit for public inquiry: unless Mr. Deane means to put a stop to all future informations. I can likewise tell Mr. Deane, that Mr. Lee was particularly commissioned by a certain body, and that under every sacred promise of inviolable secrecy, to make discoveries in England, and transmit them. Surely Mr. Deane must have left his discretion with his papers, or he would see the imprudence of his present conduct.

In the course of Mr. Deane's narrative he mentions Dr. Berkenhout again. "In September last," says he, "I was informed that Dr. Berk-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

enhout, who I have before mentioned, was in jail in this city. I confess I was surprised, considering what I have already related, that this man should have the audacity to appear in the capital of America." But why did not Mr. Deane confront Dr. Berkenhout while he was here? Why did he not give information to Congress or to the Council before whom he was examined, and by whom he was discharged and sent back for want of evidence against him?

Mr. Deane was the only person that knew anything of him, and it looks very unfavorable in him that he was silent when he should have spoke, if he had anything to say, and now he has gone has a great deal to tell, and that about nothing. "I immediately," says Mr. Deane, "*set myself about* the measures which I conceived necessary to *investigate his plans and designs.*" This is indeed a trifling excuse, for it wanted no great deal of *setting about*, the whole secret as well as the means being with himself, and half an hour's information might have been sufficient. What Mr. Deane means by "*investigating his plans and designs,*" I cannot understand, unless he intended to have the Doctor's nativity cast by a conjurer. Yet this trifling round-about story is one of Mr. Deane's "stub-

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

born and undeniable facts.” However it is thus far a fact, that Mr. Deane kept it a secret till the man was gone.

He likewise entertains us with a history of what passed at New York between Dr. Berkenhout and Governor Johnstone; but as he must naturally think that his readers must wonder how he came by such knowledge, he prudently supplies the defect by saying “that Providence in whom we put our trust, *‘unfolded it to me,’*”—*revealed it, I suppose.*

As to what Dr. Berkenhout was, or what he came for, is a matter of very little consequence to us. He appeared to be a man of good moral character, of a studious turn of mind, and genteel behavior, and whether he had whimsically employed himself, or was employed on a foolish errand by others, is a business not worth our inquiring after; he got nothing here, and to send him back was both necessary and civil. He introduced himself to General Maxwell at Elizabeth Town, as knowing Mr. Arthur Lee; the General wrote a letter of information to Colonel R. H. Lee, who presented the same to Congress. But it does not appear that Mr. Deane moved in the matter till a considerable time after the Doctor was sent off, and then Mr. Deane put a series

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

of queries in the newspaper to know why he was let go. I little thought at that time that the queries were Mr. Deane's, as they really appeared to me to be the produce of some little mind.

Mr. Deane likewise tells us that Mr. A. Lee was suspected by some of our best friends because of his acquaintance with Lord Shelburne; and perhaps some Mr. Deane in England might find out that Lord Shelburne ought to be suspected because of his acquaintance with Mr. Lee. Mr. Deane appears to me neither to understand characters nor business, or he would not mention Lord Shelburne on such an occasion whose uniform and determined opposition to the Ministry appears to be known to everybody but Mr. Deane. Mr. Deane has given us a quotation from a letter [of Arthur Lee's] which he never saw, and had it likewise from a gentleman in France who had never seen it, but who had heard it from a correspondent in England to whom it was *not* sent; and this traditionary story is another of Mr. Deane's *stubborn and undeniable facts*. But even supposing the quotation to be true, the only inference from it is naturally this, "That *the sooner England makes peace with America the better it will be for her.*"

Had the intimation been given before the

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

treaty with France was signed, it might have been justly censured, but being given after, it can have but *one* meaning, and that a *clear* one. He likewise says, that Charles Fox “declared pointedly in the House of Commons,” that the treaty between France and America was signed, and as Charles Fox knows Lord Shelburne, and Lord Shelburne Mr. Lee, therefore Mr. Deane infers, “as a stubborn and undeniable fact,” that Mr. Lee must tell it. Does Mr. Deane know that nothing can be long a secret in a court, especially where the countries are but twenty miles apart, and that Charles Fox, from his ingratiating manners, is almost universally known in France?

Mr. Deane likewise supposes that William Lee, Esquire, continues an alderman of London, and either himself or some other gentleman since, under the signature of “*OBSERVATOR*,” says that “he has *consulted*, on this *point*, the Royal Calendar or Annual Register,” and finds it true. To *consult* a calendar to find out a name must be a learned consultation indeed.

An alderman of London is neither a place at court nor a place of profit, and if the city chooses not to expel him, it is a proof they are very good Whigs; and this is the only proved fact in Mr.

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

Deane's address. But there is, through the whole of it, a barbarous, unmanly and unsupported attack on absent characters, which are, perhaps, far superior to his own; an eagerness to create suspicions wherever he can catch an opportunity; an over-strained desire to be believed; and an affected air of giving importance to trifles.

He accuses Mr. [Arthur] Lee of incivility to the French nation. Mr. Lee, if I can judge by his writing, is too much both of a scholar and a gentleman to deserve such a censure. He might with great justice complain of Mr. Deane's contracts with individuals; for we are fully sensible, that the gentlemen which have come from France since the arrival of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Lee in that country, are of a different rank to the generality of those with whom Mr. Deane contracted when alone. And this observation will, I believe explain that charge no ways to Mr. Deane's honor.

Upon the whole, I cannot help considering this publication as one of the most irrational performances I ever met with. He seems in it to pay no regard to individual safety, nor cares who he may involve in the consequences of his quarrel. He mentions names without restraint, and stops at no discovery of persons. A public man,

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

in Mr. Deane's former character, ought to be as silent as the grave; for who would trust a person with a secret who showed such talent for revealing? Under the pretense of doing good he is doing mischief, and in a tumult of his own creating, will expose and distress himself.

Mr. Deane's address was calculated to catch several sorts of people: The rash, because they are fond of fiery things; the curious, because they are fond of curiosities; the weak, because they easily believe; the good, because they are unsuspicious; the Tory, because it comforts his discontent; the high Whig, because he is jealous of his rights; the man of national refinement, because it obscurely hints at national dishonor. The clamor, it is true, has been a popular one, and so far as it is the sign of a *living* principle, it is pleasant to see it; but when once understood it will amount to nothing, and with the rapidity that it rose it will descend.

### COMMON SENSE.

*Philadelphia, December 14, 1788.*

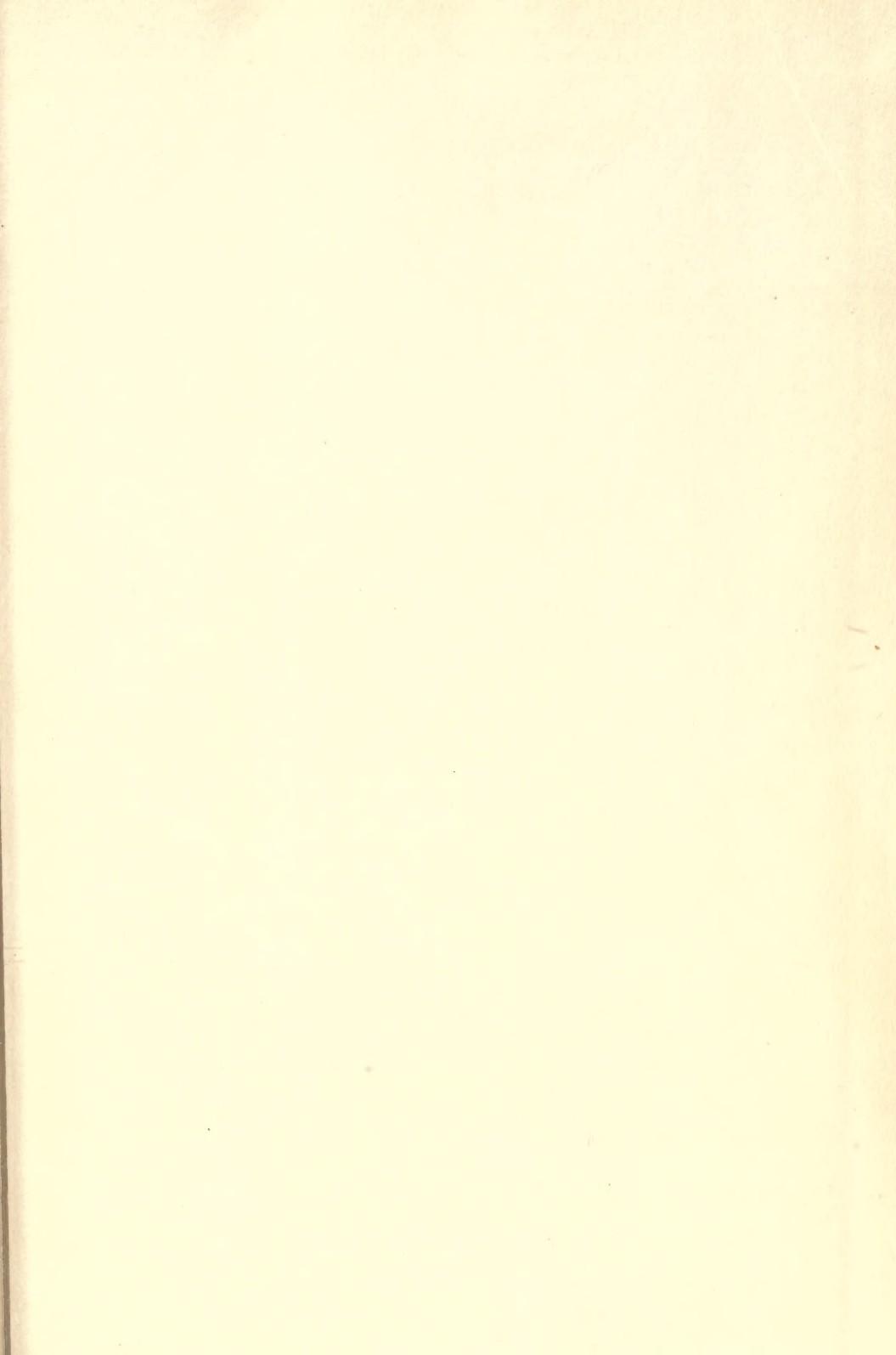
P.S.—The writer of this has been waited on by a gentleman, whom he supposes, by his conversation, to be a friend of Mr. Deane's, and whom Mr. Deane, but not any other person, is

## WRITINGS OF THOMAS PAINE

welcome to know whenever he pleases. The gentleman informed the writer, that some persons, whom he did not mention, had threatened most extraordinary violence against him (the writer of this piece) for taking the matter up; the writer asked, what, whether right or wrong? and likewise informed the gentleman, that he had done it solely with a view of putting the public right in a matter which they did not understand—that the threat served to increase the necessity, and was therefore an excitement to his doing it. The gentleman, after expressing his good opinion of, and personal respect for, the writer, withdrew.









JC            Paine, Thomas  
177            Life and writings  
A3  
1908  
v.2

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE  
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

---

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

---

